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THE EWING BOOK

Scenes from the Tales of

JULIANA HORATIA EWING

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THE EWING BOOK

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SCENES FROM THE TALES OF

JULIANA HORATIA EWING

EDITED BY E. M. ALLSOPP

LONDON
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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The importance has long been realised of providing older children with selections from standard prose writers and of training them to appreciate the difference between good and bad literature. Hitherto, however, the practice has usually been either to rely on "reading books" containing a large number of snippets from various authors, or to choose a standard novel to be read and more or less studied by the pupils.

The objections to the books of snippets are obvious; the extracts are rarely long enough to give the full flavour of any writer's style and characteristics; too many writers are included for the pupils to be interested in; and very frequently the extracts are chosen, not because they will be interesting to children, but because they are considered by literary critics to be best as literature.

But from the point of view of the teacher there are almost equally serious objections to the use of any complete novel by a great writer. There are few, if any, standard novels that are wholly suitable for use by normal children between the ages of eleven and fourteen or fifteen years. In some the language is here and there so difficult as to make reading burdensome to all but the exceptionally gifted children. In others many of the characters, situations and incidents do not appeal to ordinary children. The result of using

such novels has, unfortunately, only too often been to give many children, if not an actual distaste for good novels, a certain disinclination to tackle them. To meet these objections many teachers have adopted abridged and even simplified editions of great works and have succeeded in giving to their scholars only a partial and often misleading impression of the author. In any case the reading of one novel (or even two) by say Scott or Dickens, can obviously do very little towards giving children anything like an adequate idea of the greatness of these men, of their varied sympathies, of the many-sidedness of their genius. It may, of course, and often does, induce children to read other novels by the same author ; so far it is all to the good. But important as the development of interest in the work of Sir Walter Scott may be, it is not the only reason for reading his novels in schools.

If good literature is read at all, it should be used as a means of training in the elements of taste, appreciation and criticism ; and this training can be given only by affording means of comparison and contrast with other aspects of the same writer's genius.

It seems, therefore, to be far preferable to give children a series of extracts from one writer, to choose those extracts to illustrate all the main aspects of his greatness, and to include only passages which have been proved by experience to interest most children.

In this way a teacher may provide a four or five year course, not only of good literary reading but also of broad and intelligent study of literature, dealing with one author at a time by means of the simple exercises and questions based on the extracts. Thus the chief

objections to the books of snippets from many authors, to the complete novels, and to the abridged or simplified versions of these novels are overcome. The material is suitable for children; it is not presented in any misleading or pretentious form; the thread of each novel is given and every extract is therefore likely to lead children to wish to read the complete work; the varied character of the passages is sufficient to provide, in the hands of a skilful teacher, a sound basis for the training of appreciation, sympathetic criticism, and of a genuine insight into the greatness of the author.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

JULIANA HORATIA EWING was the second daughter of the Rev. Alfred Gatty, D.D., Vicar of Ecclesfield, near Sheffield, and his wife, Margaret Gatty, the well-known author of "Parables from Nature" and other popular books. She was known, when a girl, by her numerous brothers and sisters as "Aunt Judy" whence came the name of "Aunt Judy's Magazine," and of "Aunt Judy's Tales," which her mother wrote.

In 1867 she married Mr. Alexander Ewing, who is distinguished from other members of the same talented family as Major, afterwards Lieut.-Colonel, Ewing. For a few years his military duties took them to Fredericton, New Brunswick, reflexions of which time may be seen in some of her stories. Most of her stories were written after her return; but she suffered constantly from bad health, and it is marvellous that she accomplished so much and such highly-finished work during her comparatively short life. She died in 1885 in her forty fourth year, and is buried in the churchyard of Trull, near Taunton, Somerset.

MRS. EWING AND HER TALES
(1841-1885)

Boys and girls like to read about other boys and girls, and Mrs. Ewing, herself the eldest of a large family, has written many delightful tales about English children of almost every age, kind and degree. In her pages we meet and learn to know children rich and poor, clever and stupid, wise and unwise, kind and thoughtless, brave and timid, adventurous and unenterprising, sick and well, human and fairy. The daily lives of these children are described for us with such tenderness, with such humour and fun, with such understanding and sympathy, that we learn to know and to love as if they were our own dear friends, the lonely workhouse boy who cared for Daddy Darwin and his doves ; the gipsy waif Lob-lie-by-the-fire ; the plucky little Jackanapes who became a fine soldier like his father and his grandfather ; the adventurous Charlie and his sister Henrietta ; Ida the sea-captain's lonely daughter ; the deserted little Jan, who became a great artist and never forgot the dear companions of his childhood ; the gifted Eleanor, her jolly brothers and her girl friend in their pleasant moorland home.

They are pictured for us by Mrs. Ewing with a skill and a charm that few, if any writers have ever surpassed.

There are many stories here that will make you laugh ;

and you will be very strange boys and girls indeed if some of the others do not make you cry just in pity and tenderness. Some of these tales may make you think that perhaps Mrs. Ewing knew you yourselves and you may feel a little uncomfortable when she describes some of your own weaknesses. On the other hand you may feel proud sometimes when she describes some of the nobler children.

But it is not only children we find in her stories. Here too are the children's mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, cousins and teachers; as well as squires, parsons and workpeople. We meet and seem to know quite intimately the schoolmaster, who, after a life's search, finds at last a genius in Jan of the windmill; the old Irish woman, Betty Macartney, selling coffee on a Liverpool wharf and longing for the return of her ne'er-do-well son; dear old Mrs. Overtheway who comforts the lonely Ida; and many other characters drawn in an equally clever and vivid way.

Perhaps few other writers have given us the very breath and fragrance of the English countryside as Mrs. Ewing has done. We seem to get the true spirit of rural England with all its beauty and simplicity; its maintenance of social distinctions and its snobbery; its large heartedness coupled with its narrowness of mind and its obstinacy; its peculiar restrictions and its special opportunities; its all pervading atmosphere of quiet and peace. We catch but few glimpses of the towns. Certainly Jan finds in a town the opportunity for his talent; and some of the more adventurous boys seek the ports to board the ships that go to foreign lands. But in Mrs. Ewing's tales, disillusionment usually comes to those

who leave the quiet countryside. Later on you will be able to compare Mrs. Ewing with other novelists who have not deliberately restricted themselves in order that they may make a great appeal to children ; and you will find greater dramatic power, a larger canvas, a better constructed story and great passionate scenes. But you will not find any books that depict with greater insight, sympathy, humour and kindly understanding life in the English villages.

Her simple descriptions of scenery and especially of woodlands and moors ; her kindly attitude towards animals and birds are, in their way, as good as anything that has been written.

As for her fairy stories, they range from sad to gay ; all of them are thoughtful and wise ; all teach most wholesome lessons in a very convincing way.

Another feature of her books is the prominence given to clever girls like Eleanor and Henrietta. In this connection it must be remembered that Mrs. Ewing was writing at a time when people were only just beginning to think that girls ought to be educated ; that they ought to learn something more than fine needlework, music and " deportment." Mrs. Ewing was therefore something of a pioneer in the cause of education for girls.

Of all her books, " *Six to Sixteen* " and " *Mrs. Overtheway's Remembrances* " are especially interesting to girls. " *We and the World*," " *Jackanapes*," " *Jan of the Windmill* " and " *Lob-lie-by-the-Fire* " are of particular interest to boys.

Both boys and girls however will enjoy all these and also " *Daddy Darwin's Dovecot*," " *A Great Emergency*,"

" Mary's Meadow," " A Flat Iron for a Farthing," " Melchior's Dream."

Some of these volumes contain also a number of short stories. The best fairy stories are in the volumes called *" The Brownies "* and *" Old Fashioned Fairy Tales."*

In this Ewing Book I have tried to give some of the best parts of the long stories, and a few of the short tales. My aim has been to make the book as varied and as interesting as I can, both for boys and girls, in the hope that you will be tempted to read all Mrs. Ewing's charming books for yourselves.

E. M. A.

Most of Mrs. Ewing's Tales first appeared in " Aunt Judy's Magazine." The more important publications in volume form were :—

Melchior's Dream, and other Tales ...	1862
Mrs. Overtheway's Remembrances ...	1868
The Brownies, and other Tales ...	1871
A Flat Iron for a Farthing	1872
Jan of the Windmill	1876
Six to Sixteen	1875
We and the World	1880
A Great Emergency, and other Tales	1885
Jackanapes	1879
The Story of a Short Life	1882
Old-fashioned Fairy Tales	1882
Lob lie-by-the-Fire, and other Tales	1873

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I. AN IDYLL OF THE WOOD

"TELL us a story," said the children, "a sad one, if you please, and a little true. But, above all, let it end badly, for we are tired of people who live happily ever after."

"I heard one lately," said the old man who lived in the wood; "it is founded on fact, and is a sad one also; but whether it ends badly or no I cannot pretend to say. That is a matter of taste: what is a bad ending?"

"A story ends badly," said the children with authority, "when people die, and nobody marries anybody else, especially if it is a prince and princess."

"A most lucid explanation," said the old man. "I think my story will do, for the principal character dies, and there is no wedding."

"Tell it, tell it!" cried his hearers, "and tell us also where you got it from."

"Who knows the riches of a wood in summer?" said the old man. "In summer, do I say? In spring, in autumn, or in winter either. Who knows them? You, my children? Well, well. Better than some of your elders, perchance. You know the wood where I live; the hollow tree that will hold five children, and Queen Mab knows how many fairies. (What a castle it makes! And if it had but another floor put into it, with a sloping ladder—like one of the round towers of Ireland—what a house for children to live in! With

no room for lesson-books, grown-up people, or beds!)

"You know the way to the hazel copse, and the place where the wild strawberries grow. You know where the wren sits on her eggs, and, like good children, pass by with soft steps and hushed voices, that you may not disturb that little mother. You know (for I have shown you) where the rare fern grows—a habitat happily yet unnoted in scientific pages. *We* never add its lovely fronds to our nosegays, and if we move a root it is but to plant it in another part of the wood, with as much mystery and circumspection as if we were performing some solemn druidical rite. It is to us as a king in hiding, and the places of its abode we keep faithfully secret. It will be thus held sacred by us until, with all the seeds its untouched fronds have scattered, and all the offshoots we have propagated, it shall have become as plentiful as Heaven intends all beautiful things to be. Every one is not so scrupulous. There are certain ladies and gentlemen who picnic near my cottage in the hot weather, and who tell each other that they love a wood. Most of these good people have nevertheless neither eyes nor ears for what goes on around them, except that they hear each other, and see the cold collation. They will picnic there summer after summer, and not know whether they sit under oaks or ashes, beeches or elms. All birds sing for them the same song. Tell *them* that such a plant is rare in the neighbourhood, that there are but few specimens of it, and it will not long be their fault if there are any. Does any one direct them to it, they tear it ruthlessly up and carry it away. If by any chance a root is left, it is left so dragged and pulled and denuded of earth, that there

is small chance that it will survive. Probably, also, the ravished clump dies in the garden or pot to which it is transplanted, either from neglect, or from ignorance of the conditions essential to its life; and the rare plant becomes yet rarer. Oh! without doubt they love a wood. It gives more shade than the largest umbrella, and is cheaper for summer entertainment than a tent: there you get canopy and carpet, fuel and water, shade and song, and beauty—all gratis; and these are not small matters when one has invited a large party of one's acquaintance. There are insects, it is true, which somewhat disturb our friends; and as they do not know which sting, and which are harmless, they kill all that come within their reach, as a safe general principle. The town boys, too! They know the wood—that is to say, they know where the wild fruits grow, and how to chase the squirrel, and rob the birds' nests, and snare the birds. Well, well, my children; to know and love a wood truly, it may be that one must live in it as I have done; and then a lifetime will scarcely reveal all its beauties, or exhaust its lessons. But even then, one must have eyes that see, and ears that hear, or one misses a good deal. It was in the wood that I heard this story that I shall tell you."

"How did you hear it?" asked the children.

"A thrush sang it to me one night."

"One night?" said the children. "Then you mean a nightingale."

"I mean a thrush," said the old man. "Do I not know the note of one bird from another? I tell you that pine tree by my cottage has a legend of its own, and the topmost branch is haunted. Must all legends

be about the loves and sorrows of our self-satisfied race alone ? "

" But did you really and truly hear it ? " they asked.

" I heard it," said the old man. " But, as I tell you, one hears and one hears. I don't say that everybody would have heard it, merely by sleeping in my chamber ; but, for the benefit of the least imaginative, I will assure you that it is founded on fact."

" Begin ! begin ! " shouted the children.

" Once upon a time," said the old man, " there was a young thrush, who was born in that beautiful dingle where we last planted the ——— fern. His home-nest was close to the ground, but the lower one is, the less fear of falling ; and in woods, the elevation at which you sleep is a matter of taste, and not of expense or gentility. He awoke to life when the wood was dressed in the pale fresh green of early summer ; and believing, like other folk, that his own home was at least the principal part of the world, earth seemed to him so happy and so beautiful an abode, that his heart felt ready to burst with joy. The ecstasy was almost pain, till wings and a voice came to him. Then, one day, when, after a grey morning, the sun came out at noon, drawing the scent from the old pine that looks in at my bedroom window, his joy burst forth, after long silence, into song, and flying upwards, he sat on the top-most branch of the pine, and sang as loud as he could sing to the sun and the blue sky.

" ' Joy ! joy ! ' he sang. ' Fresh water and green woods, ambrosial sunshine and sunflecked shade, chattering brooks and rustling leaves, glade, and sward, and dell. Lichens and cool mosses, feathered ferns and

flowers. Green leaves! Green leaves! Summer! summer! summer!'

"It was monotonous, but every word came from the singer's heart, which is not always the case. Thenceforward, though he slept near the ground, he went up every day to this pine, as to some sacred high place, and sang the same song, of which neither he nor I were ever weary.

"Let one be ever so inoffensive, however, one is not long left in peace in this world, even in a wood. The thrush sang too loudly of his simple happiness, and some boys from the town heard him and snared him, and took him away in a dirty cloth cap, where he was nearly smothered. The world is certainly not exclusively composed of sunshine, and green woods, and odorous pines. He became almost senseless during the hot dusty walk that led to the town. It was a seaport town, about two miles from the wood, a town of narrow, steep streets, picturesque old houses, and odours compounded of tar, dead fish, and many other scents less agreeable than forest perfumes. The thrush was put into a small wicker-cage in an upper room, in one of the narrowest and steepest of the streets.

"'I shall die to-night,' he piped. But he did not. He lived that night, and for several nights and days following. The boys took small care of him, however. He was often left without food, without water, and always with too little air. Two or three times they tried to sell him, but he was not bought, for no one could hear him sing. One day he was hung outside the window, and partly owing to the sun and fresh air, and partly because a woman was singing in the street,

he began to carol his old song.

"The woman was a street singer. She was even paler, thinner, and more destitute-looking than such women usually are. In some past time there had been beauty and feeling in her face, but the traces of both were well-nigh gone. An indifference almost amounting to vacancy was there now, and, except that she sang, you might almost have fancied her a corpse. In her voice also, there had once been beauty and feeling, and here again the traces were small indeed. From time to time she was stopped by fits of coughing, when an ill-favoured hunchback, who accompanied her on a tambourine, swore and scowled at her. She sang a song of sentiment, with a refrain about

'Love and truth,
And joys of youth—'

on which the melody dwelt and quavered as if in mockery. As she sang, a sailor came down the street. His collar was very large, his trousers were very wide, his hat hung on the back of his head more as an ornament than for shelter; and he had one of the roughest faces and the gentlest hearts that ever went together since Beauty was entertained by the Beast. His hands were in his pockets, where he could feel one shilling and a penny, all the spare cash that remained to him after a friendly stroll through the town. When he saw the street singer, he stopped, pulled off his hat, and scratched his head, as was his custom when he was puzzled or interested.

"'It's no good keeping an odd penny,' he said to himself; 'poor thing, she looks bad enough!' And, bringing the penny to the surface out of the depths of his pocket, he gave it to the woman. The hunchback

came forward to take it, but the sailor passed him with a shove of his elbow, and gave it to the singer, who handed it over to her companion without moving a feature, and went on with her song.

" ' I'd like to break every bone in your ugly body,' muttered the sailor, with a glance at the hunchback, who scowled in return.

" ' I shall die of this close street, and of all I have suffered,' thought the thrush.

" ' Green leaves ! green leaves ! ' he sang, for it was the only song he knew.

" ' My voice is gone,' thought the hunchback's companion. ' He'll beat me again to-night ; but it can't last long : '

' Love and truth,
And joys of youth—'

she sang, for that was the song she had learned ; and it was not her fault that it was inappropriate.

" But the ballad-singer's captivity was nearly at an end. When the hunchback left her that evening to spend the sailor's penny with the few others which she had earned, he swore that when he came back he would make her sing louder than she had done all day. Her face showed no emotion, less than it did when he saw it hours after, when beauty and feeling seemed to have returned to it in the peace of death, when he came back and found the cage empty, and that the long prisoned spirit had flown away to seek the face of love and truth indeed.

" But how about the thrush ?

" The sailor had scarcely swallowed the wrath which the hunchback had stirred in him, when his ear was

caught by the song of the thrush above him.

" ' You sing uncommon well, pretty one,' he said, stopping and putting his hat even farther back than usual to look up. He was one of those good people who stop a dozen times in one street, and look at everything as they go along; whereby you may see three times as much of life as other folk, but it is a terrible temptation to spend money. It was so in this instance. The sailor looked till his kindly eye perceived that the bird was ill-cared for.

" ' It should have a bit of sod, it *should*,' he said emphatically, taking his hat off, and scratching his head again; ' and there's not a crumb of food on board. Maybe, they don't understand the ways of birds here. It would be a good turn to mention it.'

" With this charitable intention he entered the house, and when he left it, his pocket was empty, and the thrush was carried tenderly in his handkerchief.

" ' The canary died last voyage,' he muttered apologetically to himself, ' and the money always does go somehow or other.'

" The sailor's hands were about three times as large and coarse as those of the boy who had carried the thrush before, but they seemed to him three times more light and tender—they were handy and kind, and this goes farther than taper fingers.

" The thrush's new home was not in the narrow streets. It was in a small cottage in a small garden at the back of the town. The canary's old cage was comparatively roomy, and food, water, and fresh turf were regularly supplied to him. He could see green leaves too. There was an apple tree in the garden, and two geraniums,

a fuchsia, and a tea-rose in the window. Near the tea-rose an old woman sat in the sunshine. She was the sailor's mother, and looked very like a tidily kept window plant herself. She had a little money of her own, which gave her a certain dignity, and her son was very good to her; and so she dwelt in considerable comfort, dividing her time chiefly between reading in the big Bible, knitting socks for Jack, and raising cuttings in bottles of water. She had heard of hot-houses and forcing frames, but she did not think much of them. She believed a bottle of water to be the most natural, because it was the oldest method she knew of, and she thought no good came of new-fangled ways, and trying to outdo Nature.

"'Slow and sure is best,' she said, and stuck to her own system.

"'What's that, my dear?' she asked, when the sailor came in and held up the handkerchief. He told her.

"'You're always a-laying out your money on something or other,' said the old lady, who took the privilege of her years to be a little testy. 'What did you give for *that*?'

"'A shilling, ma'am.'

"'Tst! tst! tst!' said the old lady, disapprovingly.

"'Now, Mother, don't shake that cap of yours off your head,' said the sailor. 'What's a shilling? If I hadn't spent it, I should have changed it; and once change a shilling, and it all dribbles away in coppers, and you get nothing for it. But spend it in the lump, and you get something you want. That's what I say.'

"'*I* want no more pets,' said the old lady, stiffly.

"'Well, you won't be troubled with this one long,' said her son; 'it'll go with me, and that's soon enough.'

"Any allusion to his departure always melted the old lady, as Jack well knew. She became tearful, and begged him to leave the thrush with her.

"'You know, my dear, I've always looked to your live things as if they were Christians; and loved them too (unless it was that monkey that I never *could* do with!). Leave it with me, my dear. I'd never bother myself with a bird on board ship, if I was you.'

"'That's because you've got a handsome son of your own, old lady,' chuckled the sailor; 'I've neither chick nor child, ma'am, remember, and a man must have something to look to. The bird'll go with me.'

"And so it came to pass that just when the thrush was becoming domesticated, and almost happy at the cottage, one morning the sailor brought him fresh turf and groundsel, besides his meal-cake, and took the cage down. And the old woman kissed the wires, and bade the bird good-bye, and blessed her son, and prayed Heaven to bring him safe home again; and they went their way.

"The forecastle of a steam-ship (even of a big one) is a poor exchange for a snug cottage to any one but a sailor. To Jack, the ship was home. *He* had never lived in a wood, and carolled in tree-tops. He preferred blue to green, and pine masts to pine trees; and he smoked his pipe very comfortably in the forecastle, whilst the ship rolled to and fro, and swung the bird's cage above his head. To the thrush it was only an imprisonment that grew worse as time went on. Each succeeding day made him pine more bitterly for his

native woods—for fresh air and green leaves, and the rest and quiet, and sweet perfumes, and pleasant sounds of country life. His turf dried up, his groundsel withered, and no more could be got. He longed even to be back with the old woman—to see the apple tree, and the window plants, and be still. The shudder of the screw, the blasts of hot air from the engine and cook's galley, the ceaseless jangling, clanging, pumping noises, and all the indescribable smells which haunt a steam-ship, became more wearisome day by day. Even when the cage was hung outside, the sea breeze seemed to mock him with its freshness. The rich blue of the waters gave him no pleasure, his eyes failed with looking for green, the bitter, salt spray vexed him, and the wind often chilled him to the bone, whilst the sun shone, and icebergs gleamed upon the horizon.

"The sailor had been so kind a master, that the thrush had become deeply attached to him, as birds will; and while at the cottage he had scarcely fretted after his beloved wood. But with every hour of the voyage, home sickness came more strongly upon him, and his heart went back to the nest, and the pine-top, and the old home. When one sleeps soundly, it is seldom that one remembers one's dreams; but when one is apt to be roused by an unexpected lurch of the ship, by the moan of a fog-whistle, or the scream of an engine, one becomes a light sleeper, and the visions of the night have a strange reality, and are easily recalled. And now the thrush always dreamt of home.

"One day he was hung outside. It was not a very fine day, but he looked drooping, and the pitying sailor brought him out, to get some air. His heart was sore

with home sickness, and he watched the sea-birds skimming up and down with envious eyes. It seemed all very well for poor men, who hadn't so much as a wing to carry them over the water, to build lumbering sea-nests, with bodies to float in the water like fish, and wings of canvas to carry them along, and to help it out with noisy steam-engines—and to endure it all. But for him, who could fly over a hundred tree-tops before a man could climb to one, it was hard to swing outside a ship, and to watch other birds use their wings, when his, which quivered to fly homewards, could only flutter against the bars. As he thought, a roll of the ship threw him forward, the wind shook the wires of the cage, and loosened the fastening ; and, when the vessel righted, the cage-door swung slowly open.

" At this moment, a ray of sunshine streaked the deep blue water, and a gleaming sea-bird, which had been sitting like a tuft of foam upon a wave, rose with outstretched pinions, and soared away. It was too much. With one shrill pipe of hope, the thrush fluttered from his cage, spread his wings, and followed him.

" When the sailor found that the wind was getting up, he came to take the cage down, and then his grief was sore indeed.

" ' The canary died last voyage,' he said, sadly. ' The cage was bought on a Friday, and I knew ill luck would come of it. I said so to Mother ; but the old lady says there's no such thing as luck, and she's Bible-learned, if ever a woman was. " That's very true," says I, " but if I'd the money for another cage, I wouldn't use this ; " and I never will again. Poor bird ! it was a sweet singer.' And he turned his face aside.

"'It may have the sense to come back,' said one of the crew. The sailor scratched his head, and shook it sadly.

"'Noah's bird came back to him, when she found no rest,' he said, 'but I don't think mine will, Tom.'

"He was right. The thrush returned no more. He did not know how wide was the difference between his own strength and that of the bird he followed. The sea-fowl cut the air with wings of tenfold power; he swooped up and down, he stooped to fish, he rested on the ridges of the dancing waves, and then, with one steady flight, he disappeared, and the thrush was left alone. Other birds passed him, and flew about him, and fished, and rocked upon the waters near him, but he held steadily on. Ships passed him also, but too far away for him to rest upon; whales spouted in the distance, and strange fowl screamed; but not a familiar object broke the expanse of the cold sea. He did not know what course he was taking. He hoped against hope that he was going home. Although he was more faint and weary than he had ever yet been, he felt no pain. The intensity of his hope to reach the old wood made everything seem light; even at the last, when his wings were almost powerless, he believed that they would bear him home, and was happy. Already he seemed to rest upon the trees, the waters sounded in his ears like the rustling of leaves, and the familiar scent of the pine tree seemed to him to come upon the breeze.

"In this he was not wrong. A country of pine woods was near; and land was in sight, though too far away for him to reach it now. Not home, but yet a land of wondrous summer beauty; of woods, and flowers, and

sun-flecked leaves—of sunshine more glowing than he had ever known—of larger ferns, and deeper mosses, and clearer skies—a land of balmy summer nights, where the stars shine brighter than with us, and where fireflies appear and vanish, like stars of a lower firmament, amid the trees. As the sun broke out, the scent of pines came strong upon the land breeze. A strange land, but the thrush thought it was his own.

"'I smell woods,' he chirped faintly; 'I see the sun. This is home!'

"All round him, the noisy crests of the fresh waves seemed to carol the song he could no longer sing—'Home, home! fresh water and green woods, ambrosial sunshine and sun-flecked shade, chattering brooks and rustling leaves, glade and sward and dell, lichens and cool mosses, feathered ferns and flowers. Green leaves! green leaves! Summer! summer! summer!'

"The slackened wings dropped, the dying eyes looked landward, and then closed. But even as he fell, he believed himself sinking to rest on Mother Earth's kindly bosom, and he did not know it, when the cold waves buried him at sea."

"Oh, then, he *did* die!" cried the children, who, though they were tired of stories that end happily, yet, when they heard it, liked a sad ending no better than other children do (in which, by-the-by, we hold them to be in the right, and can hardly forgive ourselves for chronicling this "ower true tale").

"Yes," said the old man, "he died; but it is said that the sweet dingle which was his home—forsaken by the nightingale—is regarded by birds as men regard a haunted house; for that at still summer midnight,

when other thrushes sleep, a shadowy form, more like a skeleton leaf than a living bird, swings upon the tall tree-tops where he sat of old, and, rapt in a happy ecstasy, sings a song more sweet and joyous than thrush ever sang by day."

"Have you heard it?" asked the children.

The old man nodded. But not another word would he say. The children, however, forthwith began to lay plans for getting into the wood some midsummer night, to test with their own ears the truth of his story, and to hear the spectre thrush's song. Whether the authorities permitted the expedition, and if not, whether the young people baffled their vigilance—whether they heard the song, and if so, whether they understood it—we are not empowered to tell here.

II. DADDY DARWIN'S DOVECOT

SCENE I

This describes the parson's daughter and her many duties in the parish. She decides to celebrate her twenty-first birthday by giving a tea-party to the children of the neighbouring workhouse.

SCENE II

FATHERLESS—motherless—homeless!

A little workhouse-boy, with a swarthy face and tidily-cropped black hair, as short and thick as the fur of a mole, was grubbing, not quite so cleverly as a mole, in the workhouse garden.

He had been set to weed, but the weeding was very irregularly performed, for his eyes and heart were in the clouds as he could see them over the big boundary wall. For there—now dark against the white, now white against the gray—some Air Tumbler pigeons were turning somersaults on their homeward way, at such short and regular intervals that they seemed to be tying knots in their lines of flight.

It was too much! The small gardener shamelessly abandoned his duties, and, curving his dirty paws on each side of his mouth, threw his whole soul into shouting words of encouragement to the distant birds.

"That's a good un! On with thee! Over ye go! Oo—ooray!"

It was this last prolonged cheer which drowned the sound of footsteps on the path behind him, so that if he had been a tumbler pigeon himself he could not have jumped more nimbly when a man's hand fell upon his shoulder. Up went his arms to shield his ears from a well-merited cuffing; but Fate was kinder to him than he deserved. It was only an old man (prematurely aged with drink and consequent poverty), whose faded eyes seemed to rekindle as he also gazed after the pigeons, and spoke as one who knows.

"Yon's Daddy Darwin's Tumblers."

This old pauper had only lately come into "the House" (the house that never was a home!), and the boy clung eagerly to his flannel sleeve, and plied him thick and fast with questions about the world without the workhouse-walls, and about the happy owner of those yet happier creatures who were free not only on the earth but in the skies.

The poor old pauper was quite as willing to talk as the boy was to listen. It restored some of that self-respect which we lose under the consequences of our follies to be able to say that Daddy Darwin and he had been mates together, and had had pigeon-fancying in common "many a long year afore" he came into the House.

And so these two made friendship over such matters as will bring man and boy together to the end of time. And the old pauper waxed eloquent on the feats of Homing Birds and Tumblers, and on the points of Almonds and Barbs, Fantails and Pouters; sprinkling

his narrative also with high-sounding and heterogeneous titles, such as Dragons and Archangels, Blue Owls and Black Priests, Jacobins, English Horsemen and Trumpeters. And through much boasting of the high stakes he had had on this and that pigeon-match then, and not a few bitter complaints of the harsh hospitality of the House he "had come to" now, it never seemed to occur to him to connect the two, or to warn the lad who hung upon his lips that one cannot eat his cake with the rash appetites of youth, and yet hope to have it for the support and nourishment of his old age.

The longest story the old man told was of a "bit of a trip" he had made to Liverpool, to see some Antwerp Carriers flown from thence to Ghent, and he fixed the date of this by remembering that his twin sons were born in his absence, and that though their birthday was the very day of the race, his "missus turned stoopid," as women (he warned the boy) are apt to do, and refused to have them christened by uncommon names connected with the fancy. All the same, he bet the lads would have been nicknamed the Antwerp Carriers, and known as such to the day of their death, if this had not come so soon and so suddenly, of croup; when (as it oddly chanced) he was off on another "bit of a holiday" to fly some pigeons of his own in Lincolnshire.

This tale had not come to an end when a voice of authority called for "Jack March," who rubbed his mole-like head and went ruefully off, muttering that he should "catch it now."

"Sure enough! sure enough!" chuckled the unamiable old pauper.

But again Fate was kinder to the lad than his friend.

His negligent weeding passed unnoticed, because he was wanted in a hurry to join the other children in the school-room. The parson's daughter had come, the children were about to sing to her, and Jack's voice could not be dispensed with.

He " cleaned himself " with alacrity, and taking his place in the circle of boys standing with their hands behind their backs, he lifted up a voice worthy of a cathedral choir, whilst varying the monotony of sacred song by secretly snatching at the tail of the terrier as it went snuffing round the legs of the group. And in this feat he proved as much superior to the rest of the boys (who also tried it) as he excelled them in the art of singing.

Later on he learnt that the young lady had come to invite them all to have tea with her on her birthday. Later still he found the old pauper once more, and questioned him closely about the village and the Vicarage, and as to which of the parishioners kept pigeons, and where.

And when he went to his straw bed that night, and his black head throbbed with visions and high hopes, these were not entirely of the honour of drinking tea with a pretty young lady, and how one should behave himself in such abashing circumstances. He did not even dream principally of the possibility of getting hold of that silver-haired, tawny-pawed dog by the tail under freer conditions than those of this afternoon, though that was a refreshing thought.

What kept him long awake was thinking of this. From the top of an old walnut-tree at the top of a field at the back of the Vicarage, you could see a hill, and on

the top of the hill some farm buildings. And it was here (so the old pauper had told him) that those pretty pigeons lived, who, though free to play about among the clouds, yet condescended to make an earthly home—in Daddy Darwin's Dovecot.

SCENE III

Two and two, girls and boys, the young lady's guests marched down to the Vicarage. The school-mistress was anxious that each should carry his and her tin mug, so as to give as little trouble as possible; but this was resolutely declined, much to the children's satisfaction, who had their walk with free hands, and their tea out of teacups and saucers like anybody else.

It was a fine day, and all went well. The children enjoyed themselves, and behaved admirably into the bargain. There was only one suspicion of misconduct, and the matter was so far from clear that the parson's daughter hushed it up, and, so to speak, dismissed the case.

The children were playing at some game in which Jack March was supposed to excel, but when they came to look for him he could nowhere be found. At last he was discovered, high up among the branches of an old walnut-tree at the top of the field, and though his hands were unstained and his pockets empty, the gardener, who had been the first to spy him, now loudly denounced him as an ungrateful young thief. Jack, with swollen eyes and cheeks besmirched with angry tears, was vehemently declaring that he had only climbed the tree to "have a look at Master Darwin's pigeons,"

and had not picked so much as a leaf, let alone a walnut ; and the gardener, " shaking the truth out of him " by the collar of his fustian jacket, was preaching loudly on the sin of adding falsehood to theft, when the parson's daughter came up, and, in the end, acquitted poor Jack, and gave him leave to amuse himself as he pleased.

It did not please Jack to play with his comrades just then. He felt sulky and aggrieved. He would have liked to play with the terrier who had stood by him in his troubles, and barked at the gardener ; but that little friend now trotted after his mistress, who had gone to choir-practice.

Jack wandered about among the shrubberies. By and by he heard sounds of music, and led by these he came to a gate in a wall, dividing the Vicarage garden from the churchyard. Jack loved music, and the organ and the voices drew him on till he reached the church porch ; but there he was startled by a voice that was not only not the voice of song, but was the utterance of a moan so doleful that it seemed the outpouring of all his own lonely, and outcast, and injured feelings in one comprehensive howl.

It was the voice of the silver-haired terrier. He was sitting in the porch, his nose up, his ears down, his eyes shut, his mouth open, bewailing in bitterness of spirit the second and greater crook of his lot.

To what purpose were all the caresses and care and indulgence of his mistress, the daily walks, the weekly washings and combings, the constant companionship, when she betrayed her abiding sense of his inferiority, first, by not letting him sleep on the white quilt, and secondly, by never allowing him to go to church ?

Jack shared the terrier's mood. What were tea and plum-cake to him, when his pauper-breeding was so stamped upon him that the gardener was free to say—"A nice tale too! What's thou to do wi' doves, and thou a work'us lad?"—and to take for granted that he would thieve and lie if he got the chance?

His disabilities were not the dog's, however. The parish church was his as well as another's, and he crept inside and leaned against one of the stone pillars, as if it were a big, calm friend.

Far away, under the transept, a group of boys and men held their music near to their faces in the waning light. Among them towered the burly choir-master, baton in hand. The parson's daughter was at the organ. Well accustomed to produce his voice to good purpose, the choir-master's words were clearly to be heard throughout the building, and it was on the subject of articulation and emphasis, and the like, that he was speaking; now and then throwing in an extra aspirate in the energy of that enthusiasm without which teaching is not worth the name.

"That'll not do. We must have it altogether different. You two lads are singing like bumble-bees in a pitcher—horder there, boys!—it's no laughing matter—put down those papers and keep your eyes on me—inflate the chest—" (his own seemed to fill the field of vision) "and try and give forth those noble words as if you'd an idea what they meant."

No satire was intended or taken here, but the two boys, who were practising their duet in an anthem, laid down the music, and turned their eyes on their teacher.

"I'll run through the recitative," he added, "and

take your time from the stick. And mind that OH."

The parson's daughter struck a chord, and then the burly choir-master spoke with the voice of melody:

"My heart is disquieted within me. My heart—my heart is disquieted within me. And the fear of death is fallen—is fallen upon me."

The terrier moaned without, and Jack thought no boy's voice could be worth listening to after that of the choir-master. But he was wrong. A few more notes from the organ, and then, as night-stillness in a wood is broken by the nightingale, so upon the silence of the church a boy-alto's voice broke forth in obedience to the choir-master's uplifted hand:

"*Then*, I said—I said——"

Jack gasped, but even as he strained his eyes to see what such a singer could look like, with higher, clearer notes the soprano rose above him—"Then I sa—a—id," and the duet began:

"OH that I had wings—Oh that I had wings like a dove!"

Soprano.—"Then would I flee away." *Alto.*—"Then would I flee away." *Together.*—"And be at rest—flee away and be at rest."

The clear young voices soared and chased each other among the arches, as if on the very pinions for which they prayed. Then—swept from their seats by an upward sweep of the choir-master's arms—the chorus rose, as birds rise, and carried on the strain.

It was not a very fine composition, but this final chorus had the singular charm of fugue. And as the voices mourned like doves, "Oh that I had wings!" and pursued each other with the plaintive passage,

"Then would I flee away—then would I flee away—away——" Jack's ears knew no weariness of the repetition. It was strangely like watching the rising and falling of Daddy Darwin's pigeons, as they tossed themselves by turns upon their homeward flight.

After the fashion of the piece and period, the chorus was repeated, and the singers rose to supreme effort. The choir-master's hands flashed hither and thither, controlling, inspiring, directing. He sang among the tenors.

Jack's voice nearly choked him with longing to sing too. Could words of man go more deeply home to a young heart caged within workhouse walls?

"Oh that I had wings like a dove! Then would I flee away—" the choir-master's white hands were fluttering downwards in the dusk, and the chorus sank with them—"flee away and be at rest!"

SCENE IV

Jack March had a busy little brain, and his nature was not of the limp type that sits down with a grief. That most memorable tea-party had fired his soul with two distinct ambitions. First, to be a choirboy; and, secondly, to dwell in Daddy Darwin's Dovecot. He turned the matter over in his mind, and patched together the following facts:

The Board of Guardians meant to apprentice him, Jack, to some master, at the earliest opportunity. Daddy Darwin (so the old pauper told him) was a strange old man, who had come down in the world, and now

lived quite alone, with not a soul to help him in the house or outside it. He was "not to say *mazclin* yet, but getting helpless, and uncommon mean."

A nephew came one fine day, and fetched away the old pauper, to his great delight. It was by their hands that Jack despatched a letter, which the nephew stamped and posted for him, and which was duly delivered on the following morning to Mr. Darwin of the Dovecot.

The old man had no correspondents, and he looked long at the letter before he opened it. It did credit to the teaching of the workhouse school-mistress.

"HONOURED SIR,

"They call me Jack March. I'm a workhouse lad, but, Sir, I'm a good one, and the Board means to prentice' me next time. Sir, if you face the Board and take me out you shall never regret it. Though I says it as shouldn't I'm a handy lad. I'll clean a floor with any one, and am willing to work early and late, and at your time of life you're not what you was, and them birds must take a deal of seeing to. I can see them from the garden when I'm set to weed, and I never saw nought like them. Oh, Sir, I do beg and pray you let me mind your pigeons. You'll be none the worse of a lad about the place, and I shall be happy all the days of my life. Sir, I'm not unthankful, but, please GOD, I should like to have a home, and to be with them house doves.

"From your humble servant—hoping to be—

"JACK MARCH.

"Mr. Darwin, Sir. I love them Tumblers as if they was my own."

Daddy Darwin thought hard and thought long over that letter. He changed his mind fifty times a day. But Friday was the Board day, and when Friday came he "faced the Board." And the little workhouse lad went home to Daddy Darwin's Dovecot.

SCENE V

THE bargain was oddly made, but it worked well. Whatever Jack's parentage may have been (and he was named after the stormy month in which he had been born), the blood that ran in his veins could not have been beggars' blood. There was no hopeless, shiftless, invincible idleness about him. He found work for himself when it was not given him to do, and he attached himself passionately and proudly to all the belongings of his new home.

"Yon lad of yours seems handy enough, Daddy; —for a vagrant, as one may say."

Daddy Darwin was smoking over his garden wall, and Mrs. Shaw, from the neighbouring farm, had paused in her walk for a chat. She was a notable housewife, and there was just a touch of envy in her sense of the improved appearance of the doorsteps and other visible points of the Dovecot. Daddy Darwin took his pipe out of his mouth to make way for the force of his reply:

"*Vagrant*! Nay, missus, yon's no vagrant. *He's fettling up all along.* Jack's the sort that if he finds a key he'll look for the lock; if ye give him a knifeblade he'll fashion a heft. Why, a vagrant's a chap that, if he'd all your maester owns to-morrow, he'd be on the tramp again afore t' year were out, and three years

wouldn't repair t' mischief he'd leave behind him. A vagrant's a chap that if ye lend him a thing he loses it; if ye give him a thing he abuses it——"

"That's true enough, and there's plenty servant-girls the same," put in Mrs. Shaw.

"Maybe there be, ma'am—maybe there be; vagrants' children, I reckon. But yon little chap I got from t' House comes of folk that's had stuff o' their own, and cared for it—choose who they were."

"Well, Daddy," said his neighbour, not without malice, "I'll wish you a good evening. You've got a good bargain out of the parish, it seems."

But Daddy Darwin only chuckled, and stirred up the ashes in the bowl of his pipe.

"The same to you, ma'am—the same to you. Aye! he's a good bargain—a *very* good bargain is Jack March."

It might be supposed from the foregoing dialogue that Daddy Darwin was a model householder, and the little workhouse boy the neatest creature breathing. But the gentle reader who may imagine this is much mistaken.

Daddy Darwin's Dovecot was freehold, and when he inherited it from his father there was still attached to it a good bit of the land that had passed from father to son through more generations than the church registers were old enough to record. But the few remaining acres were so heavily mortgaged that they had to be sold. So that a bit of house property elsewhere, and the old homestead itself, were all that was left. And Daddy Darwin had never been the sort of man to retrieve his luck at home, or to seek it abroad.

That he had inherited a somewhat higher and more

refined nature than his neighbours had rather hindered than helped him to prosper. And he had been unlucky in love. When what energies he had were in their prime, his father's death left him with such poor prospects that the old farmer to whose daughter he was betrothed broke off the match and married her elsewhere. His Alice was not long another man's wife. She died within a year from her wedding-day, and her husband married again within a year from her death. Her old lover was no better able to mend his broken heart than his broken fortunes. He only banished women from the Dovecot, and shut himself up from the coarse consolation of his neighbours.

In his loneliness, eating a kindly heart out in bitterness of spirit, with all that he ought to have had—

> "To plough and sow
> And reap and mow"—

gone from him, and in the hands of strangers; the pigeons, for which the Dovecot had always been famous, became the business and the pleasure of his life. But of late years his stock had dwindled, and he rarely went to pigeon-matches or competed in shows and races. A more miserable fancy rivalled his interest in pigeon-fancying. His new hobby was hoarding; and money that, a few years back, he would have freely spent to improve his breed of Tumblers or back his Homing birds he now added with stealthy pleasure to the store behind the secret panel of a fine old oak bedstead that had belonged to the Darwyn who owned Dovecot when the sixteenth century was at its latter end. In this bedstead Daddy slept lightly of late, as old men will, and he had

horrid dreams, which old men need not have. The queer faces carved on the panels (one of which hid the money hole) used to frighten him when he was a child. They did not frighten him now by their grotesque ugliness, but when he looked at them, *and knew which was which*, he dreaded the dying out of twilight into dark, and dreamed of aged men living alone, who had been murdered for their savings. These growing fears had had no small share in deciding him to try Jack March ; and to see the lad growing stronger, nimbler, and more devoted to his master's interests day by day, was a nightly comfort to the poor old hoarder in the bed-head.

As to his keen sense of Jack's industry and carefulness, it was part of the incompleteness of Daddy Darwin's nature, and the ill-luck of his career, that he had a sensitive perception of order and beauty, and a shrewd observation of ways of living and qualities of character, and yet had allowed his early troubles to blight him so completely that he never put forth an effort to rise above the ruin, of which he was at least as conscious as his neighbours.

That Jack was not the neatest creature breathing, one look at him, as he stood with pigeons on his head and arms and shoulders, would have been enough to prove. As the first and readiest repudiation of his workhouse antecedents he had let his hair grow till it hung in the wildest elf-locks, and though the terms of his service with Daddy Darwin would not, in any case, have provided him with handsome clothes, such as he had were certainly not the better for any attention he bestowed upon them. As regarded the Dovecot, however, Daddy Darwin had not done more than justice to his bargain.

A strong and grateful attachment to his master, and a passionate love for the pigeons he tended, kept Jack constantly busy in the service of both ; the old pigeon-fancier taught him the benefits of scrupulous cleanliness in the pigeon-cote, and Jack " stoned " the kitchen-floor and the doorsteps on his own responsibility.

The time did come when he tidied up himself.

SCENE VI

DADDY DARWIN had made the first breach in his solitary life of his own free will, but it was fated to widen. The parson's daughter soon heard that he had got a lad from the workhouse, the very boy who sang so well and had climbed the walnut-tree to look at Daddy Darwin's pigeons. The most obvious parish questions at once presented themselves to the young lady's mind. " Had the boy been christened ? Did he go to church and Sunday-school ? Did he say his prayers and know his Catechism ? Had he a Sunday suit ? Would he do for the choir ?"

Then, supposing (a not uncommon case) that the boy *had* been christened, *said* he said his prayers, *knew* his Catechism, and *was* ready for school, church, and choir, but had not got a Sunday suit—a fresh series of riddles propounded themselves to her busy brain. " Would her father yield up his every-day coat and take his Sunday one into weekday wear ? Could the charity bag do better than pay the tailor's widow for adapting this old coat to the new chorister's back, taking it in at the seams, turning it wrong-side out, and getting new sleeves out of the old tails ? Could she herself spare the boots

which the village cobbler had just re-soled for her—somewhat clumsily—and would the 'allowance' bag bear this strain? Might she hope to coax an old pair of trousers out of her cousin, who was spending his Long Vacation at the Vicarage, and who never reckoned very closely with *his* allowance and kept no charity bag at all? Lastly, would 'that old curmudgeon at the Dovecot' let his little farm-boy go to church and school and choir?"

"I must go and persuade him," said the young lady.

What she said, and what (at the time) Daddy Darwin said, Jack never knew. He was at high sport with the terrier round the big sweetbrier bush, when he saw his old master splitting the seams of his weather-beaten coat in the haste with which he plucked crimson clove carnations as if they had been dandelions, and presented them, not ungracefully, to the parson's daughter.

Jack knew why she had come, and strained his ears to catch his own name. But Daddy Darwin was promising pipings of the cloves.

"They are such dear old-fashioned things," said she, burying her nose in the bunch.

"We're old-fashioned altogether, here, Miss," said Daddy Darwin, looking wistfully at the tumble-down house behind them.

"You're very pretty here," said she, looking also, and thinking what a sketch it would make, if she could keep on friendly terms with this old recluse, and get leave to sit in the garden. Then her conscience smiting her for selfishness, she turned her big eyes on him and put out her small hand.

"I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Darwin, very

much obliged to you indeed. And I hope that Jack will do credit to your kindness. And thank you so much for the cloves," she added, hastily changing a subject which had cost some argument, and which she did not wish to have re-opened.

Daddy Darwin had thoughts of re-opening it. He was slowly getting his ideas together to say that the lad should see how he got along with the school before trying the choir, when he found the young lady's hand in his, and had to take care not to hurt it, whilst she rained thanks on him for the flowers.

" You're freely welcome, Miss," was what he did say after all.

In the evening, however, he was very moody, but Jack was dying of curiosity, and at last could contain himself no longer.

" What did Miss Jenny want, Daddy ? " he asked.

The old man looked very grim.

" First to mak' a fool of me, and i' t' second place to mak' a fool of thee," was his reply. And he added with pettish emphasis, " They're all alike, gentle and simple. Lad, lad ! if ye'd have any peace of your life never let a woman's foot across your threshold. Steek t' door of your house—if ye own one—and t' door o' your heart—if ye own one—and then ye'll never rue. Look at this coat ! "

And the old man went grumpily to bed, and dreamed that Miss Jenny had put her little foot over his threshold, and that he had shown her the secret panel, and let her take away his savings.

And Jack went to bed, and dreamed that he went to school, and showed himself to Phœbe Shaw in his

Sunday suit.

This dainty little damsel had long been making havoc in Jack's heart. The attraction must have been one of contrast, for whereas Jack was black and grubby, and had only week-day clothes—which were ragged at that—Phœbe was fair, and exquisitely clean, and quite terribly tidy. Her mother was the neatest woman in the parish. It was she who was wont to say to her trembling handmaid, " I hope I can black a grate without blacking myself." But little Phœbe promised so far to out-do her mother, that it seemed doubtful if she could " black herself " if she tried. Only the bloom of childhood could have resisted the polishing effects of yellow soap, as Phœbe's brow and cheeks did resist it. Her shining hair was compressed into a plait that would have done credit to a rope-maker. Her pinafores were speckless, and as to her white Whitsun frock—Jack could think of nothing the least like Phœbe in that, except a snowy fantail strutting about the dovecot roof ; and, to say the truth, the likeness was most remarkable.

It has been shown that Jack March had a mind to be master of his fate, and he did succeed in making friends with little Phœbe Shaw. This was before Miss Jenny's visit, but the incident shall be recorded here.

Early on Sunday mornings it was Jack's custom to hide his work-day garb in an angle of the ivy-covered wall of the Dovecot garden, only letting his head appear over the top, from whence he watched to see Phœbe pass on her way to Sunday-school, and to bewilder himself with the sight of her starched frock, and her airs with her Bible and Prayer-book, and class-card, and clean pocket-handkerchief.

Now, amongst the rest of her Sunday paraphernalia, Phœbe always carried a posy, made up with herbs and some strong-smelling flowers. Country-women take mint and southernwood to a long hot service, as fine ladies take smelling-bottles (for it is a pleasant delusion with some writers that the weaker sex is a strong sex in the working classes). And though Phœbe did not suffer from " fainty feels " like her mother, she and her little playmates took posies to Sunday-school, and refreshed their nerves in the steam of question and answer, and hair-oil and corduroy, with all the airs of their elders.

One day she lost her posy on her way to school, and her loss was Jack's opportunity. He had been waiting half-an-hour among the ivy, when he saw her just below him, fuzzling round and round like a kitten chasing its tail. He sprang to the top of the wall.

" Have ye lost something ? " he gasped.

" My posy," said poor Phœbe, lifting her sweet eyes, which were full of tears.

A second spring brought Jack into the dust at her feet, where he searched most faithfully, and was wandering along the path by which she had come, when she called him back.

" Never mind," said she. " They'll most likely be dusty by now."

Jack was not used to think the worse of anything for a coating of dust ; but he paused, trying to solve the perpetual problem of his situation, and find out what the little maid really wanted.

" 'Twas only Old Man and marygolds," said she. " They're common enough."

A light illumined Jack's understanding.

"We've Old Man i' plenty. Wait, and I'll get thee a fresh posy." And he began to re-climb the wall.

But Phœbe drew nearer. She stroked down her frock, and spoke mincingly but confidentially. "My mother says Daddy Darwin has red bergamot i' his garden. We've none i' ours. My mother always says there's nothing like red bergamot to take to church. She says it's a deal more refreshing than Old Man, and not so common. My mother says she's always meaning to ask Daddy Darwin to let us have a root to set; but she doesn't often see him, and when she does she doesn't think on. But she always says there's nothing like red bergamot, and my Aunt Nancy, she says the same."

"*Red* is it?" cried Jack. "You wait there, love." And before Phœbe could say him nay, he was over the wall and back again with his arms full.

"Is it any o' this lot?" he inquired, dropping a small haycock of flowers at her feet.

"Don't you know one from t' other?" asked Phœbe, with round eyes of reproach. And spreading her clean kerchief on the grass she laid her Bible and Prayer-book and class-card on it, and set vigorously and nattily to work, picking one flower and another from the fragrant confusion, nipping the stalks to even lengths, rejecting withered leaves, and instructing Jack as she proceeded.

"I suppose ye know a rose? That's a double velvet.[1] They dry sweeter than lavender for linen. These dark red things is pheasants' eyes; but, dear, dear, what a lad! ye've dragged it up by the roots! And eh! what will Master Darwin say when he misses these pink hollyhocks? And only in bud, too! *There's* red bergamot;[2] smell it!"

1 Double Velvet, an old summer rose, not common now. It is described by Parkinson.
2 Red Bergamot, or Twinflower: *Monarda Didyma.*

It had barely touched Jack's willing nose when it was hastily withdrawn. Phœbe had caught sight of Polly and Susan Smith coming to school, and crying that she should be late and must run, the little maid picked up her paraphernalia (not forgetting the red bergamot), and fled down the lane. And Jack, with equal haste, snatched up the tell-tale heap of flowers and threw them into a disused pig-sty, where it was unlikely that Daddy Darwin would go to look for his poor pink hollyhocks.

SCENE VII

April was a busy month in the Dovecot. Young birds were chipping the egg, parent birds were feeding their young or relieving each other on the nest, and Jack and his master were constantly occupied and excited.

One night Daddy Darwin went to bed; but, though he was tired, he did not sleep long. He had sold a couple of handsome but quarrelsome pigeons to advantage, and had added their price to the hoard in the bed-head. This had renewed his old fears, for the store was becoming very valuable; and he wondered if it had really escaped Jack's quick observation, or whether the boy knew about it, and, perhaps, talked about it. As he lay and worried himself he fancied he heard sounds without—the sound of footsteps and of voices. Then his heart beat till he could hear nothing else; then he could undoubtedly hear nothing at all; then he certainly heard something, which probably was rats. And so he lay in a cold sweat, and pulled the rug over his face,

and made up his mind to give the money to the parson, for the poor, if he was spared till daylight.

He *was* spared till daylight, and had recovered himself, and settled to leave the money where it was, when Jack rushed in from the pigeon-house with a face of dire dismay. He made one or two futile efforts to speak, and then unconsciously used the words Shakespeare has put into the mouth of Macduff, " All my pretty 'uns ! " and so burst into tears.

And when the old man made his way to the pigeon-house, followed by poor Jack, he found that the eggs were cold and the callow young shivering in deserted nests, and that every bird was gone. And then he remembered the robbers, and was maddened by the thought that whilst he lay expecting thieves to break in and steal his money he had let them get safely off with his whole stock of pigeons.

Daddy Darwin had never taken up arms against his troubles, and this one crushed him. The fame and beauty of his house-doves were all that was left of prosperity about the place, and now there was nothing left—*nothing* ! Below this dreary thought lay a far more bitter one, which he dared not confide to Jack. He had heard the robbers ; he might have frightened them away ; he might at least have given the lad a chance to save his pets, and not a care had crossed his mind except for the safety of his own old bones, and of those miserable savings in the bed-head, which he was enduring so much to scrape together (oh satire !) for a distant connection whom he had never seen. He crept back to the kitchen, and dropped in a heap upon the settle, and muttered to himself. Then his thoughts

wandered. Supposing the pigeons were gone for good, would he ever make up his mind to take that money out of the money-hole, and buy a fresh stock? He knew he never would, and shrank into a meaner heap upon the settle as he said so to himself. He did not like to look his faithful lad in the face.

Jack looked him in the face, and, finding no help there, acted pretty promptly behind his back. He roused the parish constable, and fetched that functionary to the Dovecot before he had had bite or sup to break his fast. He spread a meal for him and Daddy, and borrowed the Shaws' light cart whilst they were eating it. The Shaws were good farmer-folk, they sympathized most fully; and Jack was glad of a few words of pity from Phœbe. She said she had watched the pretty pets "many a score of times," which comforted more than one of Jack's heartstrings. Phœbe's mother paid respect to his sense and promptitude. He had acted exactly as she would have done.

"Daddy was right enough about yon lad," she admitted. "He's not one to let the grass grow under his feet."

And she gave him a good breakfast whilst the horse was being "put to." It pleased her that Jack jumped up and left half a delicious cold tea-cake behind him when the cart-wheels grated outside. Mrs. Shaw sent Phœbe to put the cake in his pocket, and "the Maester" helped Jack in and took the reins. He said he would "see Daddy Darwin through it," and added the weight of his opinion to that of the constable, that the pigeons had been taken to "a beastly low place" (as he put it) that had lately been set up for pigeon-shooting in the

outskirts of the neighbouring town.

They paused no longer at the Dovecot than was needed to hustle Daddy Darwin on to the seat beside Master Shaw, and for Jack to fill his pockets with peas, and take his place beside the constable. He had certain ideas of his own on the matter, which were not confused by the jog-trot of the light cart, which did give a final jumble to poor Daddy Darwin's faculties.

No wonder they were jumbled! The terrors of the night past, the shock of the morning, the completeness of the loss, the piteous sight in the pigeon-house, remorseful shame, and then—after all these years, during which he had not gone half-a-mile from his own hearthstone—to be set up for all the world to see, on the front seat of a market-cart, back to back with the parish constable, and jogged off as if miles were nothing, and crowded streets were nothing, and the Beaulieu Gardens were nothing; Master Shaw talking away as easily as if they were sitting in two arm-chairs, and making no more of "stepping into" a lawyer's office, and "going on" to the Town Hall, than if he were talking of stepping up to his own bed-chamber or going out into the garden!

That day passed like a dream, and Daddy Darwin remembered what happened in it as one remembers visions of the night.

He had a vision (a very unpleasing vision) of the proprietor of the Beaulieu Gardens, a big greasy man, with sinister eyes very close together, and a hook nose, and a heavy watch-chain, and a bullying voice. He browbeat the constable very soon, and even bullied Master Shaw into silence. No help was to be had from him in his loud indignation at being supposed to traffic

with thieves. When he turned the tables by talking of slander, loss of time, and compensation, Daddy Darwin smelt money, and tremblingly whispered to Master Shaw to apologize and get out of it. "They're gone for good," he almost sobbed; "gone for good, like all t' rest! And I'll not be long after 'em."

But even as he spoke he heard a sound which made him lift up his head. It was Jack's call at feeding-time to the pigeons at the Dovecot. And quick following on this most musical and most familiar sound there came another. The old man put both his lean hands behind his ears to be sure that he heard it aright—the sound of wings—the wings of a dove!

The other men heard it and ran in. Whilst they were wrangling, Jack had slipped past them, and had made his way into a wired enclosure in front of the pigeon-house. And there they found him, with all the captive pigeons coming to his call; flying, fluttering, strutting, nestling from head to foot of him, he scattering peas like hail.

He was the first to speak, and not a choke in his voice. His iron temperament was at white heat, and, as he afterwards said, he "cared no more for yon dirty chap wi' the big nose, nor if he were a *ratten*[1] in a hayloft!"

"These is ours," he said shortly. "I'll count 'em over, and see if they're right. There was only one young 'un that could fly. A white 'un." ("It's here," interpolated Master Shaw.) "I'll pack 'em i' yon," and Jack turned his thumb to a heap of hampers in a corner. "T' carrier can leave t' baskets at t' toll-bar next Saturday, and ye may send your lad for 'em, if ye keep one."

1 Rat.

The proprietor of the Beaulieu Gardens was not a man easily abashed, but most of the pigeons were packed before he had fairly resumed his previous powers of speech. Then, as Master Shaw said, he talked "on the other side of his mouth." Most willing was he to help to bring to justice the scoundrels who had deceived him and robbed Mr. Darwin, but he feared they would be difficult to trace. His own feeling was that of wishing for pleasantness among neighbours. The pigeons had been found at the Gardens. That was enough. He would be glad to settle the business out of court.

Daddy Darwin heard the chink of the dirty man's money, and would have compounded the matter then and there. But not so the parish constable, who saw himself famous; and not so Jack, who turned eyes of smouldering fire on Master Shaw.

"Maester Shaw! you'll not let them chaps get off? Daddy's mazelin wi' trouble, sir, but I reckon you'll see to it."

"If it costs t' worth of the pigeons ten times over, I'll see to it, my lad," was Master Shaw's reply. And the parish constable rose even to a vein of satire as he avenged himself of the man who had slighted his office. "Settle it out of court? Aye! I daresay. And send t' same chaps to fetch 'em away again t' night after. Nay—bear a hand with this hamper, Maester Shaw, if you please—if it's all t' same to you, Mr. Proprietor, I think we shall have to trouble you to step up to t' Town Hall by and by, and see if we can't get shut of them mistaking friends o' yours for three month any way."

If that day was a trying one to Daddy Darwin, the

night that followed it was far worse. The thieves were known to the police, and the case was down to come on at the Town Hall the following morning; but meanwhile the constable thought fit to keep the pigeons under his own charge in the village lock-up. Jack refused to be parted from his birds, and remained with them, leaving Daddy Darwin alone in the Dovecot. He dared not go to bed, and it was not a pleasant night that he spent, dozing with weariness, and starting up with fright, in an arm-chair facing the money-hole.

Some things that he had been nervous about he got quite used to, however. He bore himself with sufficient dignity in the publicity of the Town Hall, where a great sensation was created by the pigeons being let loose without, and coming to Jack's call. Some of them fed from the boy's lips, and he was the hero of the hour, to Daddy Darwin's delight.

Then the lawyer and the lawyer's office proved genial and comfortable to him. He liked civil ways and smooth speech, and understood them far better than Master Shaw's brevity and uncouthness. The lawyer chatted kindly and intelligently; he gave Daddy Darwin wine and biscuit, and talked of the long standing of the Darwin family and its vicissitudes; he even took down some fat yellow books, and showed the old man how many curious laws had been made from time to time for the special protection of pigeons and dovecots. Very ancient statutes made the killing of a house-dove felony. Then 1 James I. c. 29, awarded three months' imprisonment "without bail or mainprise" to any person who should "shoot at, kill, or destroy with any gun, crossbow, stonebow, or longbow, any house-dove

or pigeon," but allowed an alternative fine of twenty shillings to be paid to the churchwardens of the parish for the benefit of the poor. Daddy Darwin hoped there was no such alternative in this case, and it proved that by 2 Geo. III. c. 29, the twenty-shilling fine was transferred to the owner of birds; at which point another client called, and the polite lawyer left Daddy to study the laws by himself.

It was when Jack was helping Master Shaw to put the horse into the cart, after the trial was over, that the farmer said to him, " I don't want to put you about, my lad, but I'm afraid you won't keep your master long. T' old gentleman's breaking up, mark my words! Constable and me was going into the *George* for a glass, and Master Darwin left us and went back to the office. I says, ' What are ye going back to t' lawyer for? ' and he says, ' I don't mind telling you, Master Shaw, but it's to make my will.' And off he goes. Now, there's only two more things between that and death, Jack March! And one's the parson, and t' other's the doctor."

SCENE VIII

Little Phœbe Shaw coming out of the day-school, and picking her way home to tea, was startled by folk running past her, and by a sound of cheering from the far end of the village, which gradually increased in volume, and was caught up by the bystanders as they ran. When Phœbe heard that it was " Constable, and Master Shaw, and Daddy Darwin and his lad, coming home, and the pigeons along wi' 'em," she felt inclined

to run too ; but a fit of shyness came over her, and she demurely decided to wait by the school-gate till they came her way. They did not come. They stopped. What were they doing ? Another bystander explained, " They're shaking hands wi' Daddy, and I reckon they're making him put up t' birds here, to see 'em go home to t' Dovecot."

Phœbe ran as if for her life. She loved beast and bird as well as Jack himself, and the fame of Daddy Darwin's doves was great. To see them put up by him to fly home after such an adventure was a sight not lightly to be foregone. The crowd had moved to a hillock in a neighbouring field before she touched its outskirts. By that time it pretty well numbered the population of the village, from the oldest inhabitant to the youngest that could run. Phœbe had her mother's courage and resource. Chirping out feebly but clearly, " I'm Maester Shaw's little lass, will ye let me through ? " she was passed from hand to hand, till her little fingers found themselves in Jack's tight clasp, and he fairly lifted her to her father's side.

She was just in time. Some of the birds had hung about Jack, nervous, or expecting peas ; but the hesitation was past. Free in the sweet sunshine—beating down the evening air with silver wings and their feathers like gold—ignorant of cold eggs and callow young dead in deserted nests—sped on their way by such a roar as rarely shook the village in its body corporate—they flew straight home :—to Daddy Darwin's Dovecot.

SCENE IX

DADDY DARWIN lived a good many years after making his will, and the Dovecot prospered in his hands. It would be more just to say that it prospered in the hands of Jack March. By hook and by crook he increased the live stock about the place. Folk were kind to one who had set so excellent an example to other farm lads, though he lacked the primal virtue of belonging to the neighbourhood. He bartered pigeons for fowls, and some one gave him a sitting of eggs to "see what he would make of 'em." Master Shaw gave him a little pig, with kind words and good counsel; and Jack cleaned out the disused pig-styes, which were never disused again. He scrubbed his pigs with soap and water as if they had been Christians, and the admirable animals, regardless of the pork they were coming to, did him infinite credit, and brought him profit into the bargain, which he spent on ducks' eggs, and other additions to his farmyard family.

The Shaws were very kind to him; and if Mrs. Shaw's secret must be told, it was because Phœbe was so unchangeably and increasingly kind to him, that she sent the pretty maid (who had a knack of knowing her own mind about things) to service.

Jack March was a handsome, stalwart youth now, of irreproachable conduct, and with qualities which Mrs. Shaw particularly prized; but he was but a farm-lad, and no match for her daughter.

Jack only saw his sweetheart once during several years. She had not been well, and was at home for

the benefit of "native air." He walked over the hill with her as they returned from church, and lived on the remembrance of that walk for two or three years more. Phœbe had given him her Prayer-book to carry, and he had found a dead flower in it, and had been jealous. She had asked if he knew what it was, and he had replied fiercely that he did not, and was not sure that he cared to know.

"Ye never did know much about flowers," said Phœbe, demurely, "It's red bergamot."

"I love—red bermagot," he whispered penitently, "And thou owes me a bit. I gave thee some once." And Phœbe had let him put the withered bits into his own hymn-book, which was more than he deserved.

Jack was still in the choir, and taught in the Sunday-school where he used to learn. The parson's daughter had had her way; Daddy Darwin grumbled at first, but in the end he got a bottle-green Sunday-coat out of the oak press that matched the bed-stead, and put the house-key into his pocket, and went to church too. Now, for years past he had not failed to take his place, week by week, in the pew that was traditionally appropriated to the use of the Darwins of Dovecot. In such an hour the sordid cares of the secret panel weighed less heavily on his soul, and the things that are not seen came nearer—the house not made with hands, the treasures that rust and moth corrupt not, and which thieves do not break through to steal.

Daddy Darwin died of old age. As his health failed, Jack nursed him with the tenderness of a woman; and kind inquiries, and dainties which Jack could not have cooked, came in from many quarters where it

pleased the old man to find that he was held in respect and remembrance.

One afternoon, coming in from the farmyard, Jack found him sitting by the kitchen-table as he had left him, but with a dread look of change upon his face. At first he feared there had been "a stroke," but Daddy Darwin's mind was clear and his voice firmer than usual.

"My lad," he said, "fetch me yon tea-pot out of the corner cupboard. T' one wi' a pole-house[1] painted on it, and some letters. Take care how ye shift it. It were t' merry feast-pot[2] at my christening, and yon's t' letters of my father's and mother's names. Take off t' lid. There's two bits of paper in the inside."

Jack did as he was bid, and laid the papers (one small and yellow with age, the other bigger, and blue, and neatly written upon) at his master's right hand.

"Read yon," said the old man, pushing the small one towards him. Jack took it up wondering. It was the letter he had written from the workhouse fifteen years before. That was all he could see. The past surged up too thickly before his eyes, and tossing it impetuously from him, he dropped on a chair by the table, and snatching Daddy Darwin's hands he held them to his face with tears.

"GOD bless thee!" he sobbed. "You've been a good maester to me!"

"*Daddy*," wheezed the old man. "*Daddy*, not maester." And drawing his right hand away, he laid it solemnly on the young man's head. "GOD bless *thee*, and reward thee. What have I done i' my feckless

1 A *pole-house* is a small dovecot on the top of a pole.
2 "Merry feast-pot" is a name given to old pieces of ware, made in local potteries for local festivals.

"'AYE! HE'S A GOOD BARGAIN—'"

(p. 28)

life to deserve a son? But if ever a lad earned a father and a home, thou hast earned 'em, Jack March."

He moved his hand again and laid it trembling on the paper.

"Every word i' this letter ye've made good. Every word, even to t' bit at the end. 'I love them Tumblers as if they were my own,' says you. Lift thee head, lad, and look at me. *They are thy own*! . . . Yon blue paper's my last will and testament, made many a year back by Mr. Brown, of Green Street, Solicitor, and a very nice gentleman too; and witnessed by his clerks, two decent young chaps, and civil enough, but with too much watch-chain for their situation. Jack March, my son, I have left thee maester of Dovecot and all that I have. And there's a bit of money in t' bed-head that'll help thee to make a fair start, and to bury me decently atop of my father and mother. Ye may let Bill Sexton toll an hour-bell for me, for I'm a old standard, if I never were good for much. Maybe I might ha' done better if things had happed in a different fashion; but the Lord knows all. I'd like a hymn at the grave, Jack, if the Vicar has no objections, and do thou sing if thee can. Don't fret, my son, thou'st no cause. 'Twas that sweet voice o' thine took me back a-gain to public worship, and it's not t' least of all I owe thee, Jack March. A poor reason, lad, for taking up with a neglected duty—a poor reason—but the Lord is a God of mercy, or there'd be small chance for most on us. If Miss Jenny and her husband come to t' Vicarage this summer, say I left her my duty and an old man's blessing; and if she want's any roots out of t' garden, give 'em her, and give her yon old chest that stands in the back

chamber. It belonged to an uncle of my mother's—a Derbyshire man. They say her husband's a rich gentleman, and treats her very well. I reckon she may have what she's a mind, new and polished, but she's always for old lumber. They're a whimsical lot, gentle and simple. And talking of *women*, Jack, I've a word to say, if I can fetch my breath to say it. Lad! as sure as you're maester of Dovecot, you'll give it a missus. Now take heed to me. If ye fetch any woman home here but Phœbe Shaw, I'll *walk*, and scare ye away from t' old place. I'm willing for Phœbe, and I charge ye to tell the lass so hereafter. And tell her it's not because she's fair—too many on 'em are that; and not because she's thrifty and house-proud—her mother's that, and she's no favourite of mine; but because I've watched her whenever t' ould cat's let her be at home, and it's my belief that she loves ye, knowing nought of *this*" (he laid his hand upon the will), "and that she'll stick to ye, choose what her folk may say. Aye, aye, she's not one of t' sort that quits a falling house—*like rattens.*"

Language fails to convey the bitterness which the old man put into these last two words. It exhausted him, and his mind wandered. When he had to some extent recovered himself he spoke again, but very feebly.

"Tak' my duty to the Vicar, lad, Daddy Darwin's duty, and say he's at t' last feather of the shuttle, and would be thankful for the Sacrament."

* * * * * *

The Parson had come and gone. Daddy Darwin did not care to lie down, he breathed with difficulty;

so Jack made him easy in a big arm-chair, and raked up the fire with cinders, and took a chair on the other side of the hearth to watch with him. The old man slept comfortably, and at last, much wearied, the young man dozed also.

He awoke because Daddy Darwin moved, but for a moment he thought he must be dreaming. So erect the old man stood, and with such delight in his wide-open eyes. They were looking over Jack's head.

All that the lad had never seen upon his face seemed to have come back to it—youth, hope, resolution, tenderness. His lips were trembling with the smile of acutest joy.

Suddenly he stretched out his arms, and crying, "Alice!" started forward and fell—dead—on the breast of his adopted son.

III. LOB LIE-BY-THE-FIRE

"Lob Lie-by-the-Fire"—the Lubber-fiend, as Milton calls him—is a rough kind of Brownie or House Elf, supposed to haunt some north-country homesteads, where he does the work of the farm labourers, for no grander wages than

"——to earn his cream bowl duly set."

"It was said that a Lob Lie-by-the-Fire once haunted the little old hall at Lingborough. It was an old stone house on the Borders," the home of Miss Betty and Miss Kitty, two charming old ladies. But there had been no lubber-fiend in their time. One night when they were returning from a party with the parson they found a small baby lying under the gorse by the roadside. His parents could not be found, so the two tender-hearted old ladies, after much hesitation, decided to bring him up in their own house so that he might learn to be useful on the farm.

Babyhood.—Pretty Flowers.—The Rose-coloured Tulips.

The matter of the baby's cap disturbed the little ladies. It seemed so like the beginning of a fulfilment of the lawyer's croakings.

Miss Kitty had made it. She had never seen a baby without a cap before, and the sight was unusual, if not indecent. But Miss Kitty was a quick needlewoman, and when the new cap was fairly tied over the thick crop of silky black hair, the baby looked so much less like Puck, and so much more like the rest of the baby world, that it was quite a relief.

Miss Kitty's feelings may therefore be imagined when, going to the baby just after the parson's departure, she found him in open rebellion against his cap. It had been tied on whilst he was asleep, and his eyes were no sooner open than he commenced the attack. He pulled with one little brown hand and tugged with the other ; he dragged a rosette over his nose and got the frills into his eyes ; he worried it as a puppy worries your handkerchief if you tie it round its face and tell it to " look like a grandmother." At last the strings gave way, and he cast it triumphantly out of the clothes-basket which served him for cradle

Successive efforts to induce him to wear it proved vain, so Thomasina the servant, said the weather was warm and his hair was very thick, and she parted this and brushed it, and Miss Kitty gave the cap to the farm-bailiff's baby, who took to it as kindly as a dumpling to a pudding-cloth.

How the boy was ever kept inside his christening clothes, Thomasina said she did not know. But when he got into the parson's arms he lay quite quiet, which was a good omen. That he might lack no advantage, Miss Betty stood godmother for him, and the parish clerk and the sexton were his godfathers.

He was named John.

" A plain, sensible name," said Miss Betty. "And while we are about it," she added, " we may as well choose his surname. For a surname he must have, and the sooner it is decided upon the better."

Miss Kitty had made a list of twenty-seven of her favourite Christian names, which Miss Betty had sternly rejected, that everything might be plain, practical,

and respectable at the outset of the tramp-child's career. For the same reason she refused to adopt Miss Kitty's suggestions for a surname.

"It's so seldom there's a chance of *choosing* a surname for anybody, sister," said Miss Kitty, "it seems a pity not to choose a pretty one."

"Sister Kitty," said Miss Betty, "don't be romantic. The boy is to be brought up in that station of life for which one syllable is ample. I should have called him Smith if that had not been Thomasina's name. As it is, I propose to call him Broom. He was found under a bush of broom, and it goes very well with John, and sounds plain and respectable."

So Miss Betty bought a Bible, and on the fly-leaf of it she wrote in her fine, round, gentlewoman's writing—"*John Broom. With good wishes for his welfare, temporal and eternal. From a sincere friend.*" And when the inscription was dry the Bible was wrapped in brown paper, and put by in Thomasina's trunk till John Broom should come to years of discretion.

He was slow to reach them, though in other respects he grew fast.

When he began to walk he would walk barefoot. To be out of doors was his delight, but on the threshold of the house he always sat down and discarded his shoes and stockings. Thomasina bastinadoed the soles of his feet with the soles of his shoes "to teach him the use of them," so she said. But Miss Kitty sighed, and thought of the lawyer's prediction.

There was no blinking the fact that the child was as troublesome as he was pretty. The very demon of mischief danced in his black eyes, and seemed to possess

his feet and fingers as if with quicksilver. And if, as Thomasina said, you "never knew what he would be at next," you might also be pretty sure that it would be something he ought to have left undone.

John Broom early developed a taste for glass and crockery, and as the china cupboard was in that part of the house to which he by social standing also belonged, he had many chances to seize upon cups, jugs, and dishes. If detected with anything that he ought not to have had, it was his custom to drop the forbidden toy and toddle off as fast as his unpractised feet would carry him. The havoc which this caused amongst the glass and china was bewildering in a household where tea-sets and dinner-sets had passed from generation to generation, where slapdash, giddy-pated kitchenmaids never came, where Miss Betty washed the best tea-cups in the parlour, where Thomasina was more careful than her mistress, and the breaking of a single plate was a serious matter, and, if beyond riveting, a misfortune.

Thomasina soon found that her charge was safest, as he was happiest, out of doors. A very successful device was to shut him up in the drying-ground, and tell him to "pick the pretty flowers." John Broom preferred flowers even to china cups with gilding on them. He gathered nosegays of daisies and buttercups, and the winning way in which he would present these to the little ladies atoned, in their benevolent eyes, for many a smashed teacup.

But the tramp-baby's restless spirit was soon weary of the drying-ground, and he set forth one morning in search of "fresh fields and pastures new." He had seated himself on the threshold to take off his shoes, when

he heard the sound of Thomasina's footsteps, and, hastily staggering to his feet, toddled forth without further delay. The sky was blue above him, the sun was shining, and the air was very sweet. He ran for a bit and then tumbled, and picked himself up again, and got a fresh impetus, and so on till he reached the door of the kitchen garden, which was open. It was an old-fashioned kitchen-garden with flowers in the borders. There were single rose-coloured tulips which had been in the garden as long as Miss Betty could remember, and they had been so increased by dividing the clumps that they now stretched in two rich lines of colour down both sides of the long walk. And John Broom saw them.

" Pick the pretty f'owers, love," said he, in imitation of Thomasina's patronising tone, and forthwith beginning at the end, he went steadily to the top of the right-hand border, mowing the rose-coloured tulips as he went.

Meanwhile, when Thomasina came to look for him, he could not be found, and when all the back premises and the drying-ground had been searched in vain, she gave the alarm to the little ladies.

Miss Kitty's vivid imagination leaped at once to the conclusion that the child's vagabond relations had fetched him away, and she became rigid with alarm. But Miss Betty rushed out into the shrubbery, and Miss Kitty took a whiff of her vinaigrette and followed her.

When they came at last to the kitchen-garden, Miss Betty's grief for the loss of John Broom did not prevent her observing that there was something odd about the borders, and when she got to the top, and found that all the tulips had been picked from one side, she sank down on the roller which happened to be lying beside her.

And John Broom staggered up to her, and crying, "For 'oo, Miss Betty," fell headlong with a sheaf of rose-coloured tulips into her lap.

As he did not offer any to Miss Kitty, her better judgment was not warped, and she said, "You must slap him, sister Betty."

"Put out your hand, John Broom," said Miss Betty, much agitated.

And John Broom, who was quite composed, put out both his little grubby paws so trustfully that Miss Betty had not the heart to strike him. But she scolded him, "Naughty boy!" and she pointed to the tulips and shook her head. John Broom looked thoughtfully at them, and shook his.

"Naughty boy!" repeated Miss Betty, and she added in very impressive tones, "John Broom's a very naughty boy!"

After which she took him to Thomasina, and Miss Kitty collected the rose-coloured tulips and put them into water in the best old china punch-bowl.

In the course of the afternoon she peeped into the kitchen, where John Broom sat on the floor, under the window, gazing thoughtfully up into the sky.

"As good as gold, bless his little heart!" murmured Miss Kitty. For as his feet were tucked under him, she did not know that he had just put his shoes and stockings into the pig-tub, into which he all but fell himself from the exertion. He did not hear Miss Kitty, and thought on. He wanted to be out again, and he had a tantalising remembrance of the ease with which the tender juicy stalks of the tulips went snap, snap, in that new place of amusement he had discovered.

Thomasina looked into the kitchen and went away again. When she had gone, John Broom went away also.

He went both faster and steadier on his bare feet. And when he got into the kitchen garden, it recalled Miss Betty to his mind. And he shook his head, and said, "Naughty boy!" And then he went up the left-hand border, mowing the tulips as he went; after which he trotted home, and met Thomasina at the back door. And he hugged the sheaf of rose-coloured tulips in his arms, and said, "John Broom a very naughty boy!"

Thomasina was not sentimental, and she slapped him well—his hands for picking the tulips and his feet for going barefoot.

But his feet had to be slapped with Thomasina's slipper, for his own shoes could not be found.

The Farm-Bailiff.—Pretty Cocky.—In the Willow Tree.

Miss Betty and Miss Kitty did really deny themselves the indulgence of being indulgent, and treated John Broom on principles, and for his good. But they did so in their own tremulous and spasmodic way, and got little credit for it. Thomasina, on the other hand, spoiled him with such a masterful managing air, and so much sensible talk, that no one would have thought that the only system she followed was to conceal his misdeameanours, and to stand between him and the just wrath of the farm-bailiff.

The farm-bailiff, or grieve, as he liked to call himself, was a Scotchman, with a hard-featured face (which he washed on the Sabbath), a harsh voice, a good heart rather deeper down in his body than is usual, and a

shrewd, money-getting head, with a speckled straw hat on the top of it. No one could venture to imagine when that hat was new, or how long ago it was that the farm-bailiff went to the expense of purchasing those work-day clothes. But the dirt on his face and neck was an orderly accumulation, such as gathers on walls, oil-paintings, and other places to which soap is not habitually applied; it was not a matter of spills and splashes, like the dirt John Broom disgraced himself with. And his clothes, if old, fitted neatly about him; they never suggested raggedness, which was the normal condition of the tramp-boy s jackets. They only looked as if he had been born (and occasionally buried) in them. It is needful to make this distinction, that the good man may not be accused of inconsistency in the peculiar vexation which John Broom's disorderly appearance caused him.

In truth, Miss Betty's *protégé* had reached the age at which he was to "eat dreadfully, wear out his clothes, and be useful on the farm"; and the last condition was quite unfulfilled. At eleven years old he could not be trusted to scare birds, and at half that age the farm-bailiff's eldest child could drive cattle.

"And no' just ruin the leddies in new coats and compliments, either, like some ne'er-do-weels," added the farm-bailiff, who had heard with a jealous ear of sixpences given by Miss Betty and Miss Kitty to their wasteful favourite.

When the eleventh anniversary of John Broom's discovery was passed, and his character at school gave no hopes of his ever qualifying himself to serve the lawyer, it was resolved that—"idleness being the mother

of mischief," he should be put under the care of the farm-bailiff, to do such odd jobs about the place as might be suited to his capacity and love of out-door life. And now John Broom's troubles began. By fair means or foul, with here an hour's weeding and there a day's bird scaring, and with errands perpetual, the farm-bailiff contrived to "get some work out of" the idle little urchin. His speckled hat and grim face seemed to be everywhere, and always to pop up when John Broom began to play.

They lived "at daggers drawn." I am sorry to say that John Broom's fitful industry was still kept for his own fancies. To climb trees, to run races with the sheep dog, to cut grotesque sticks, gather hedge fruits, explore a bog, or make new friends among beasts and birds—at such matters he would labour with feverish zeal. But so far from trying to cure himself of his indolence about daily drudgery, he found a new and pleasant excitement in thwarting the farm-bailiff at every turn.

It would not sound dignified to say that the farm-bailiff took pleasure in thwarting John Broom. But he certainly did not show his satisfaction when the boy did do his work properly. Perhaps he thought that praise is not good for young people; and the child did not often give him the chance of trying. Of blame he was free enough. Not a good scolding to clear the air, such as Thomasina would give to Annie the lass, but his slow, caustic tongue was always growling, like muttered thunder, over John Broom's incorrigible head.

He had never approved of the tramp-child, who had the overwhelming drawbacks of having no pedigree

and of being a bad bargain as to expense. This was not altogether John Broom's fault, but with his personal failings the farm-bailiff had even less sympathy. It has been hinted that he was born in the speckled hat, and whether this were so or not, he certainly had worn an old head whilst his shoulders were still young, and could not remember the time when he wished to waste his energies on anything that did not earn or at least save something.

Once only did anything like approval of the lad escape his lips.

Miss Betty's uncle's second cousin had returned from foreign lands with a good fortune and several white cockatoos. He kept the fortune himself, but he gave the cockatoos to his friends, and he sent one of them to the little ladies of Lingborough.

He was a lovely creature (the cockatoo, not the cousin, who was plain), and John Broom's admiration of him was boundless. He gazed at the sulphur-coloured crest, the pure white wings with their deeper-tinted lining, and even the beak and the fierce round eyes, as he had gazed at the broom bush in his babyhood, with insatiable delight.

The cousin did things handsomely. He had had a ring put round one of the cockatoo's ankles, with a bright steel chain attached and a fastener to secure it to the perch. The cockatoo was sent in the cage by coach, and a perch, made of foreign wood, followed by the carrier.

Miss Betty and Miss Kitty were delighted both with the cockatoo and the perch, but they were a good deal troubled as to how to fasten the two together. There was a neat little ring on the perch, and the cockatoo's

chain was quite complete, and he evidently wanted to get out, for he shook the walls of his cage in his gambols. But he put up his crest and snapped when any one approached, in a manner so alarming that Annie the lass shut herself up in the dairy, and the farm-bailiff turned his speckled hat in his hands, and gave cautious counsel from a safe distance.

"How he flaps!" cried Miss Betty. "I'm afraid he has a very vicious temper."

"He only wants to get out, Miss Betty," said John Broom. "He'd be all right with his perchand I think I can get him on it."

"Now Heaven save us from the sin o' presumption!" cried the farm-bailiff, and putting on the speckled hat, he added, slowly: "I'm thinking, John Broom, that if ye're engaged wi' the leddies this morning it'll be time I turned my hand to singling these few turnips ye've been thinking about the past week."

On which he departed, and John Broom pressed the little ladies to leave him alone with the bird.

"We shouldn't like to leave you alone with a wild creature like that," said Miss Betty.

"He's just frightened on ye, Miss Betty. He'll be like a lamb when you're gone," urged John Broom.

"Besides, we should like to see you do it," said Miss Kitty.

"You can look in through the window, miss. I must fasten the door, or he'll be out."

"I should never forgive myself if he hurt you, John," said Miss Betty, irresolutely, for she was very anxious to have the cockatoo and perch in full glory in the parlour.

"He'll none hurt me, miss," said John, with a cheerful

smile on his rosy face. "I likes him, and he'll like me."

This settled the matter. John was left with the cockatoo. He locked the door, and the little ladies went into the garden and peeped through the window.

They saw John Broom approach the cage, on which the cockatoo put up his crest, opened his beak slowly, and snarled, and Miss Betty tapped on the window and shook her black satin workbag.

"Don't go near him!" she cried. But John Broom paid no attention.

"What are you putting up that top-knot of yours at me for?" said he to the cockatoo. "Don't ye know your own friends? I'm going to let ye out, I am. You're going on to your perch, you are."

"Eh, but you're a bonny creature!" he added, as the cockatoo filled the cage with snow and sulphur flutterings.

"Keep away, keep away!" screamed the little ladies, playing a duet on the window panes.

"Out with you!" said John Broom, as he unfastened the cage door.

And just when Miss Betty had run round, and as she shouted through the keyhole, "Open the door, John Broom. We've changed our minds. We've decided to keep it in its cage," the cockatoo strode solemnly forth on his eight long toes.

"Pretty Cocky!" said he.

When Miss Betty got back to the window, John Broom had just made an injudicious grab at the steel chain, on which Pretty Cocky flew fiercely at him, and John, burying his face in his arms, received the attack

"YOU'VE GOT A RARE PERCH THIS TIME," SAID HE.

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on his thick poll, laughing into his sleeves and holding fast to the chain, whilst the cockatoo and the little ladies screamed against each other.

"It'll break your leg—you'll tear its eyes out!" cried Miss Kitty.

"Miss Kitty means that you'll break its leg, and it will tear your eyes out," Miss Betty explained through the glass. "John Broom! Come away! Lock it in! Let it go!"

But Cocky was now waddling solemnly round the room, and John Broom was creeping after him, with the end of the chain in one hand, and the perch in the other, and in a moment more he had joined the chain and the ring, and just as Miss Betty was about to send for the constable and have the door broken open, Cocky—driven into a corner—clutched his perch, and was raised triumphantly to his place in the bow-window.

He was now a parlour pet, and John Broom saw little of him. This vexed him, for he had taken a passionate liking for the bird. The little ladies rewarded him well for his skill, but this brought him no favour from the farm-bailiff, and matters went on as ill as before.

One day the cockatoo got his chain entangled, and Miss Kitty promptly advanced to put it right. She had unfastened that end which secured it to the perch, when Cocky, who had been watching the proceedings with much interest, dabbed at her with his beak. Miss Kitty fled, but with great presence of mind shut the door after her. She forgot, however, that the window was open, in front of which stood the cockatoo scanning the summer sky with his fierce eyes, and flapping himself in the breeze.

And just as the little ladies ran into the garden, and Miss Kitty was saying, "One comfort is, sister Betty, that it's quite safe in the room, till we can think what to do next," he bowed his yellow crest, spread his noble wings, and sailed out into the æther.

In ten minutes the whole able-bodied population of the place was in the grounds of Lingborough, including the farm-bailiff.

The cockatoo was on the top of a fir-tree, and a fragment of the chain was with him, for he had broken it, and below on the lawn stood the little ladies, who, with the unfailing courage of women in a hopeless cause, were trying to dislodge him by waving their pocket-handkerchiefs and crying "sh!"

He looked composedly down out of one eye for some time, and then he began to move.

"I think it's coming down now," said Miss Kitty.

But in a quarter of a minute, Cocky had sailed a quarter of a mile, and was rocking himself on the top of an old willow-tree. And at this moment John Broom joined the crowd which followed him.

"I'm thinking he's got his chain fast," said the farm-bailiff; "if onybody that understood the beastie daured to get near him——"

"I'll get him," said John Broom, casting down his hat.

"Ye'll get your neck thrawed," said the farm-bailiff.

"We won't hear of it," said the little ladies.

But to their horror, John Broom kicked off his shoes, after which he spat upon his hands (a shock which Miss Kitty thought she never could have survived), and away he went up the willow.

It was not an easy tree to climb, and he had one or two narrow escapes, which kept the crowd breathless, but he shook the hair from his eyes, moistened his hands afresh, and went on. The farm-bailiff's faraway heart was stirred. No Scotchman is insensible to gallantry. And courage is the only thing a "canny" Scot can bear to see expended without return.

" John Broom," screamed Miss Betty, " come down! I order, I command you to come down."

The farm-bailiff drew his speckled hat forward to shade his upward gaze, and folded his arms.

" Dinna call on him, leddies," he said, speaking more quickly than usual. " Dinna mak him turn his head. Steady lad! Grip wi' your feet. Spit on your pawms, man."

Once the boy trod on a rotten branch, and as he drew back his foot, and it came crashing down, the farm-bailiff set his teeth, and Miss Kitty fainted in Thomasina's arms.

" I'll reward anyone who'll fetch him down," sobbed Miss Betty. But John Broom seated himself on the same branch as the cockatoo, and undid the chain and prepared his hands for the downward journey.

" You've got a rare perch, this time," said he. And Pretty Cocky crept towards him, and rubbed its head against him and chuckled with joy.

What dreams of liberty in the tree tops, with John Broom for a playfellow, passed through his crested head, who shall say? But when he found that his friend meant to take him prisoner, be became very angry and much alarmed. And when John Broom grasped him by both legs and began to descend, Cocky pecked

him vigorously. But the boy held the back of his head towards him, and went steadily down.

"Weel done!" roared the farm-bailiff. "Gently, lad! Gude save us! ha'e a care o' yoursen. That's weel. Keep your pow to him. Dinna let the beast get at your een."

But when John Broom was so near the ground as to be safe, the farm-bailiff turned wrathfully upon his son, who had been gazing open-mouthed at the sight which had so interested his father.

"Ye look weel standing gawping here, before the leddies," said he, "wasting the precious hours, and bringing your father's grey hairs wi' sorrow to the grave; and John Broom yonder shaming ye, and you not so much as thinking to fetch the perch for him, ye lazy loon. Away wi' ye and get it, before I lay a stick about your shoulders."

And when his son had gone for the perch, and John Broom was safely on the ground, laughing, bleeding, and triumphant, the farm-bailiff said,—

"Ye're a bauld chiel, John Broom, I'll say that for ye."

The fact was, however, that the Scotchman was very hard on John Broom, so hard that the boy wouldn't stand it and ran away to sea. But he found life there as a cabin boy under an unkind captain much harder than life at Lingborough had ever been. Therefore he returned to England longing to tramp back to Lingborough. But pride and shame kept him from starting off. Outside a big barracks one day he made friends with a tall old Highland soldier. For him as well as for other soldiers he became a sort of errand boy, and the relation between the old soldier and the boy provides delightful reading. John and the

old Highlander M'Alister became very devoted to each other. Unfortunately M'Alister became very ill and the story goes on to show how he died.

HOSPITAL.—"HAME."

John Broom did not see the Highlander again for two or three days. It was Christmas week, and, in spite of the war panic, there was festivity enough in the barracks to keep the errand-boy very busy.

Then came New Year's Eve—"Hogmenay," as the Scotch call it—and it was the Highland regiment's particular festival. Worn-out with whisky-fetching and with helping to deck barrack-rooms and carrying pots and trestles, John Broom was having a nap in the evening, in company with a mongrel deerhound, when a man shook him, and said, "I heard some one asking for ye an hour or two back; M'Alister wants ye."

"Where is he?" said John Broom, jumping to his feet.

"In hospital; he's been there a day or two. He got cold on out-post duty, and it's flown to his lungs, they say. Ye see he's been a hard drinker, has M'Alister, and I expect he's breaking up."

With which very just conclusion the speaker went on into the canteen, and John Broom ran to the hospital.

Stripped of his picturesque trappings, and with no plumes to shadow the hollows in his temples, M'Alister looked gaunt and feeble enough, as he lay in the little hospital bed, which barely held his long limbs. Such a wreck of giant powers of body and noble qualities of mind as the drink-shops are preparing for the hospitals every day!

Since the quickly-reached medical decision that he was in a rapid decline, and that nothing could be done for him, M'Alister had been left a good deal alone. His intellect (and it was no fool's intellect) was quite clear, and if the long hours by himself, in which he reckoned with his own soul, had hastened the death-damps on his brow, they had also written there an expression which was new to John Broom. It was not the old sour look, it was a kind of noble gravity.

His light-blue eyes brightened as the boy came in, and he held out his hand, and John Broom took it with both his, saying,

"I never heard till this minute, M'Alister. Eh, I do hope you'll be better soon."

"The Lord being merciful to me," said the Highlander. "But *this* world's nearly past, laddie, and I was fain to see ye again. Dinna greet, man, for I've important business wi' ye, and I should wish your attention. Firstly, I'm aboot to hand ower to ye the key of your box. Tak it, and put it in a pocket that's no got a hole in it, if you're worth one. Secondly, there's a bit bag I made mysel', and it's got a trifle o' money in it that I'm giving and bequeathing to ye, under certain conditions, namely, that ye shall spend the contents of the box according to my last wishes and instructions, with the ultimate end of your ain benefit, ye'll understand."

A fit of coughing here broke M'Alister's discourse; but, after drinking from a cup beside him, he put aside John Broom's remonstrances with a dignified movement of his hand, and continued,—

"When a body comes of decent folk, he won't just care, maybe, to have their names brought up in a barrack-

room. Ye never heard me say ought of my father or my mither ?"

" Never, M'Alister."

" I'd a good hame," said the Highlander, with a decent pride in his tone. " It was a strict hame—I've no cause now to deceive mysel', and I'm thinking it was a wee bit ower strict—but it was a good hame. I left it, man—I ran away."

The glittering blue eyes turned sharply on the lad, and he went on :—

" A body doesna' care to turn his byeganes oot for every fool to peck at. Did I ever speer about your past life, and whar ye came from ?"

" Never, M'Alister."

" But that's no to say that, if I knew manners, I didna obsairve. And there's been things now and again, John Broom, that's gar'd me think that ye've had what I had, and done as I did. Did ye rin awa', laddie ? "

John Broom nodded his black head, but tears choked his voice.

" Man !" said the Highlander, " ane word's as gude's a thousand. Gang back ! Gang hame ! There's the bit siller here that's to tak ye, and the love yonder that's waiting ye. Listen to a dying man, laddie, and gang hame !"

" I doubt if they'd have me," sobbed John Broom, " I gave 'em a deal of trouble, M'Alister."

" And d'ye think, lad, that that thought has na' cursed *me*, and keepit me from them that loved me ? Aye lad, and till this week I never overcame it."

" Weel may I want to save ye, bairn," added the Highlander tenderly, " for it was the thocht of a' ye

riskit for the like of me at the three roads, that made me consider wi' myself that I've aiblins been turning my back a' my wilfu' life on love that's bigger than a man's deservings. It's near done now, and it'll never lie in my poor power so much as rightly to thank ye. It's strange that a man should set store by a good name that he doesna' deserve; but if ony blessings of mine could bring ye good, they're yours, that saved an old soldier's honour, and let him die respected in his regiment.

"Oh, M'Alister, let me fetch one of the chaplains to write a letter to fetch your father," cried John Broom.

"The minister's been here this morning," said the Highlander, "and I've tell't him mair than I've tell't you. And he's jest directed me to put my sinful trust in the Father of us a'. I've sinned heaviest against *Him*, laddie, but His love is stronger than the lave."

John Broom remained by his friend, whose painful fits of coughing, and of gasping for breath, were varied by intervals of seeming stupor. When a candle had been brought in and placed near the bed, the Highlander roused himself and asked,—

"Is there a Bible on yon table? Could ye read a bit to me, laddie?"

There is little need to dwell on the bitterness of heart with which John Broom confessed,—

"I can't read big words, M'Alister."

"Did ye never go to school?" said the Scotchman.

"I didn't learn," said the poor boy; "I played."

"Aye, aye. Weel, ye'll learn, when ye gang hame," said the Highlander, in gentle tones.

"I'll never get home," said John Broom, passionately,

" I'll never forgive myself. I'll never get over it, that I could'nt read to ye when ye wanted me, M'Alister."

" Gently, gently," said the Scotchman. " Dinna daunt yoursel' owermuch wi' the past, laddie. And for me—I'm not that presoomtious to think I can square up a misspent life as a man might compound wi's creditors. 'Gin He forgi'es me, He'll forgi'e; but it's not a prayer up or a chapter down that'll stan' between me and the Almighty. So dinna fret yoursel', but let me think while I may."

And so, far into the night, the Highlander lay silent, and John Broom watched by him.

It was just midnight when he partly raised himself, and cried,—

" Whisht, laddie! do ye hear the pipes?"

The dying ears must have been quick, for John Broom heard nothing; but in a few moments he heard the bagpipes from the officers' mess, where they were keeping Hogmenay. They were playing the old year out with " Auld lang syne," and the Highlander beat the tune out with his hand, and his eyes gleamed out of his rugged face in the dim light, as cairngorms glitter in dark tartan.

There was a pause after the first verse, and he grew restless, and turning doubtfully to where John Broom sat, as if his sight were failing, he said, " Ye'll mind your promise, ye'll gang hame?" And after awhile he repeated the last word,

" *Hame*!"

But as he spoke there spread over his face a smile so tender and so full of happiness, that John Broom held his breath as he watched him. As the light of sunrise creeps over the face of some rugged rock, it

crept from chin to brow, and the pale blue eyes shone tranquil, like water that reflects heaven.

And when it had passed it left them still open, but gems that had lost their ray.

Luck goes—And comes again.

The spirit does not always falter in its faith because the flesh is weary with hope deferred. When week after week, month after month, and year after year, went by and John Broom was not found, the disappointment seemed to " age " the little ladies, as Thomasina phrased it. But yet they said to the parson, " We do not regret it."

" God forbid that you should regret it," said he.

And even the lawyer (whose heart was kinder than his tongue) abstained from taunting them with his prophecies and said, " The force of the habits of early education is a power as well as that of inherent tendencies. It is only for your sake that I regret a too romantic benevolence." And Miss Betty and Miss Kitty tried to put the matter quite away. But John Broom was very closely bound up with the life of many years past. Thomasina mourned him as if he had been her son, and Thomasina being an old and valuable servant, it is needless to say that when she was miserable no one in the house was permitted to be quite at ease.

As to Pretty Cocky, he lived, but Miss Kitty fancied that he grew less pretty and drooped upon his polished perch.

There were times when the parson felt almost conscience-stricken because he had encouraged the adoption of

John Broom. Disappointments fall heavily upon elderly people. They may submit better than the young, but they do not so easily revive. The little old ladies looked greyer and more nervous, and the little old house looked greyer and gloomier than of old.

Indeed there were other causes of anxiety. Times were changing, prices were rising, and the farm did not thrive. The lawyer said that the farm-bailiff neglected his duties, and that the cowherd did nothing but drink; but Miss Betty trembled, and said they could not part with old servants.

The farm-bailiff had his own trouble, but he kept it to himself. No one knew how severely he had beaten John Broom the day before he ran away, but he remembered it himself with painful clearness. Harsh men are apt to have consciences, and his was far from easy about the lad who had been entrusted to his care. He could not help thinking of it when the day's work was over, and he had to keep filling up his evening whisky-glass again and again to drown disagreeable thoughts.

The whisky answered this purpose, but it made him late in the morning; it complicated business on market days, not to the benefit of the farm, and it put him at a disadvantage in dealing with the drunken cowherd.

The cowherd was completely upset by John Broom's mysterious disappearance, and he comforted himself as the farm-bailiff did, but to a larger extent. And Thomasina winked at many irregularities in consideration of the groans of sympathy with which he responded to her tears as they sat round the hearth where John Broom no longer lay.

At the time that he vanished from Lingborough

the gossips of the country side said, "This comes of making pets of tramps' brats, when honest folk's sons may toil and moil without notice." But when it was proved that the tramp-boy had stolen nothing, when all search for him was vain, and when prosperity faded from the place season by season and year by year, there were old folk who whispered that the gaudily-clothed child Miss Betty had found under the broom bush had something more than common in him, and that whoever and whatever had offended the eerie creature, he had taken the luck of Lingborough with him when he went away.

It was early summer. The broom was shining in the hedges with uncommon wealth of golden blossoms. "The lanes look for all the world as they did the year that poor child was found," said Thomasina, wiping her eyes. Annie the lass sobbed hysterically, and the cowherd found himself so low in spirits that after gazing dismally at the cow-stalls, which had not been cleaned for days past, he betook himself to the ale-house to refresh his energies for this and other arrears of work.

On returning to the farm, however, he found his hands still feeble, and he took a drop or two more to steady them, after which it occurred to him that certain new potatoes which he had had orders to dig were yet in the ground. The wood was not chopped for the next day's use, and he wondered what had become of a fork he had had in the morning and had laid down somewhere.

So he seated himself on some straw in the corner to think about it all, and whilst he was thinking he fell fast asleep.

By his own account many remarkable things had

befallen him in the course of his life, but nothing so strange as what happened to him that night.

When he awoke in the morning and sat up on the straw, and looked around him, the stable was freshly cleaned, the litter in the stalls was shaken and turned, and near the door was an old barrel of newly-dug potatoes, and the fork stood by it. And when he ran to the wood-house there lay the wood neatly chopped and piled to take away.

He kept his own counsel that day and took credit for the work, but when on the morrow the farm-bailiff was at a loss to know who had thinned the turnips that were left to do in the upper field, and Annie the lass found the kitchen-cloths she had left overnight to soak, rubbed through and rinsed, and laid to dry, the cowherd told his tale to Thomasina, and begged for a bowl of porridge and cream to set in the barn, as one might set a mouse-trap baited with cheese.

"For," said he, "the luck of Lingborough's come back, missis. *It's Lob Lie-by-the-fire*!"

Lob Lie-by-the-fire

'It's Lob Lie-by-the-fire!"

So Thomasina whispered exultingly, and Annie the lass timidly. Thomasina cautioned the cowherd to hold his tongue, and she said nothing to the little ladies on the subject. She felt certain that they would tell the parson, and he might not approve. The farm-

bailiff knew of a farm on the Scotch side of the Border where a brownie had been driven away by the minister preaching his last Sunday's sermon over again at him, and as Thomasina said, "There'd been little enough luck at Lingborough lately, that they should wish to scare it away when it came."

And yet the news leaked out gently, and was soon known all through the neighbourhood—as a secret. "The luck of Lingborough's come back. Lob's lying by the fire!"

He could be heard at his work any night, and several people had seen him, though this vexed Thomasina, who knew well that the Good People do not like to be watched at their labours.

The cowherd had not been able to resist peeping down through chinks in the floor of the loft above the barn, where he slept, and one night he had seen Lob fetching straw for the cowhouse. "A great rough, black fellow," said he, and he certainly grew bigger and rougher and blacker every time the cowherd told the tale.

The Lubber-fiend appeared next to a boy who was loitering at a late hour somewhere near the little ladies' kitchen-garden, and whom he pursued and pelted with mud till the lad nearly lost his wits with terror. (It was the same boy who was put in the lock-up in the autumn for stealing Farmer Mangel's Siberian crabs.)

For this trick, however, the rough elf atoned by leaving three pecks of newly-gathered fruit in the kitchen the following morning. Never had there been such a preserving season at Lingborough within the memory of Thomasina.

The truth is, hobgoblins, from Puck to Will-o'-the-wisp, are apt to play practical jokes and knock people about whom they meet after sunset. A dozen tales of such were rife, and folk were more amused than amazed by Lob Lie-by-the-fire's next prank.

There was an aged pauper who lived on the charity of the little ladies, and whom it was Miss Betty's practice to employ to do light weeding in the fields for heavy wages. This venerable person was toddling to his home in the gloaming with a barrowload of Miss Betty's new potatoes, dexterously hidden by an upper sprinkling of groundsel and hemlock, when the Lubber-fiend sprang out from behind an elder bush, ran at the old man with his black head, and knocked him, heels uppermost, into the ditch. The wheelbarrow was afterwards found in Miss Betty's farmyard, quite empty.

And when the cowherd (who had his own opinion of the aged pauper, and it was a very poor one) went that evening to drink Lob Lie-by-the-fire's health from a bottle he kept in the harness-room window, he was nearly choked with the contents, which had turned into salt and water, as fairy jewels turn to withered leaves.

But luck had come to Lingborough. There had not been such crops for twice seven years past.

The lay-away hen's eggs were brought regularly to the kitchen.

The ducklings were not eaten by rats.

No fowls were stolen.

The tub of pig-meal lasted three times as long as usual.

The cart-wheels and gate-hinges were oiled by unseen fingers.

The mushrooms in the croft gathered themselves and lay down on a dish in the larder.

It is by small savings that a farm thrives, and Miss Betty's farm throve.

Everybody worked with more alacrity. Annie the lass said the butter came in a way that made it a pleasure to churn.

The neighbours knew even more than those on the spot. They said—That since Lob came back to Lingborough the hens laid eggs as large as turkeys' eggs, and the turkeys' eggs were—oh, you wouldn't believe the size!

That the cows gave nothing but cream, and that Thomasina skimmed butter off it as less lucky folk skim cream from milk.

That her cheeses were as rich as butter.

That she sold all she made, for Lob took the fairy butter from the old trees in the avenue, and made it up into pats for Miss Betty's table.

That if you bought Lingborough turnips, you might feed your cows on them all the winter and the milk would be as sweet as new-mown hay.

That horses foddered on Lingborough hay would have thrice the strength of others, and that sheep who cropped Lingborough pastures would grow three times as fat.

That for as good a watch-dog as it was, the sheep dog never barked at Lob, a plain proof that he was more than human.

That for all its good luck it was not safe to loiter near the place after dark, if you wished to keep your senses. And if you took so much as a fallen apple

belonging to Miss Betty, you might look out for palsy or St. Vitus's dance, or to be carried off bodily to the underground folk.

Finally, that it was well that all the cows gave double, for that Lob Lie-by-the-fire drank two gallons of the best cream every day, with curds, porridge, and other dainties to match. But what did that matter, when he had been overheard to swear that luck should not leave Lingborough till Miss Betty owned half the country side?

Miss Betty is Surprised.

Miss Betty and Miss Kitty having accepted a polite invitation from Mrs. General Dunmaw, went down to tea with that lady one fine evening in this eventful summer.

Death had made a gap or two in the familiar circle during the last fourteen years, but otherwise it was quite the same, except that the lawyer was married and not quite so sarcastic, and that Mrs. Brown Jasey had brought a young niece with her dressed in the latest fashion, which looked quite as odd as new fashions are wont to do, and with a *coiffure* "enough to frighten the French away," as her aunt told her.

It was while this young lady was getting more noise out of Mrs Dunmaw's red silk and rosewood piano than had been shaken out of it during the last thirty years, that the lawyer brought his cup of coffee to Miss Betty's side, and said, suavely, "I hear wonderful accounts of Lingborough, dear Miss Betty."

"I am thankful to say, sir, that the farm is doing well this year. I am very thankful, for the past few

years have been unfavourable, and we had begun to face the fact that it might be necessary to sell the old place. And I will not deny, sir, that it would have gone far to break my heart, to say nothing of my sister Kitty's."

"Oh, we shouldn't have let it come to that," said the lawyer, "I could have raised a loan——"

"Sir," said Miss Betty with dignity, "if we have our own pride, I hope it's an honest one. Lingborough will have passed out of our family when it's kept up on borrowed money.

"I *could* live in lodgings," added Miss Betty, firmly, "little as I've been accustomed to it, but *not in debt.*"

"Well, well, my dear madam, we needn't talk about it now. But I'm dying of curiosity as to the mainstay of all this good luck."

"The turnips—" began Miss Betty.

"Bless my soul, Miss Betty!" cried the lawyer, "I'm not talking of turnips. I'm talking of Lob Lie-by-the-fire, as all the country side is for that matter."

"The country people have plenty of tales of him," said Miss Betty, with some pride in the family goblin. "He used to haunt the old barns, they say, in my great-grandfather's time."

"And now you've got him back again," said the lawyer.

"Not that I know of," said Miss Betty.

On which the lawyer poured into her astonished ear all the latest news on the subject, and if it had lost nothing before reaching his house in the town, it rather gained in marvels as he repeated it to Miss Betty.

No wonder the little lady was anxious to get home

to question Thomasina, and that somewhat before the usual hour she said,—

"Sister Kitty, if it's not too soon for the servant——"

And the parson, threading his way to where Mrs. Dunmaw's china crape shawl (dyed crimson) shone in the bow window, said "The clergy should keep respectable hours, madam; especially when they are as old as I am. Will you allow me to thank you for a very pleasant evening, and to say good-night?"

THE PARSON AND THE LUBBER-FIEND.

"Do you think there'd be any harm in leaving It alone, sister Betty?" asked Miss Kitty, tremulously.

They had reached Lingborough, and the parson had come in with them, by Miss Betty's request, and Thomasina had been duly examined.

"Eh, Miss Betty, why should ye chase away good luck with the minister?" cried she.

"Sister Kitty! Thomasina!" said Miss Betty. "I would not accept good luck from a doubtful quarter to save Lingborough. But if It can face this excellent clergyman, the Being who haunted my great-grandfather's farm is still welcome to the old barns, and you, Thomasina, need not grudge It cream or curds."

"You're quite right, sister Betty," said Miss Kitty. "You always are; but oh dear, oh dear!"—

"Thomasina tells me," said Miss Betty, turning to the parson, "that on chilly evenings It sometimes comes and lies by the kitchen fire after they have gone to bed, and I can distinctly remember my grandmother mentioning the same thing. Thomasina has of late left the kitchen door on the latch for Its convenience,

and as they had to sit up late for us, she and Annie have taken their work into the still room to leave the kitchen free for Lob Lie-by-the-fire. They have not looked into the kitchen this evening, as such beings do not like to be watched. But they fancy that they heard It come in. I trust, sir, that neither in myself nor my sister Kitty does timidity exceed a proper feminine sensibility, where duty is concerned. If you will be good enough to precede us, we will go to meet the old friend of my great-grandfather's fortunes, and we leave it entirely to your valuable discretion to pursue what course you think proper on the occasion."

"Is this the door?" said the parson, cheerfully, after knocking his head against black beams and just saving his legs down shallow and unexpected steps on his way to the kitchen—beams so unfelt and steps so familiar to the women that it had never struck them that the long passage was not the most straightforward walk a man could take—"I think you said It generally lies on the hearth?"

The happy thought struck Thomasina that the parson might be frightened out of his unlucky interference.

"Aye, aye, sir," said she from behind, "We've heard him rolling by the fire, and growling like thunder to himself. They say he's an awful size, too, with the strength of four men, and a long tail, and eyes like coals of fire."

But Thomasina spoke in vain, for the parson opened the door, and as they pressed in, the moonlight streaming through the latticed window showed Lob lying by the fire.

"There's his tail! Ay——k" screeched Annie the

lass, and away she went, without drawing breath, to the top garret, where she locked and bolted herself in, and sat her bandbox flat, and screamed for help.

But it was the plumy tail of the sheep dog, who was lying there with the Lubber-fiend. And Lob was asleep, with his arms round the sheep dog's neck, and the sheep dog's head lay on his breast, and his own head touched the dog's.

And it was a smaller head than the parson had been led to expect, and it had thick black hair.

As the parson bent over the hearth, Thomasina took Miss Kitty round the waist, and Miss Betty clutched her black velvet bag till the steel beads ran into her hands, and they were quite prepared for an explosion, and sulphur, and blue lights, and thunder.

And then the parson's deep round voice broke the silence, saying,—

"Is that you, lad? GOD bless you, John Broom. You're welcome home!"

* * * *

Some things—such as gossip—gain in the telling, but there are others before which words fail, though each heart knows its own power of sympathy. And such was the joy of the little ladies and of Thomasina at John Broom's return.

The sheep dog had had his satisfaction out long ago and had kept it to himself, but how Pretty Cocky crowed and chuckled, and danced, and bowed his crest, and covered his face with his amber wings, and kicked his seed-pot over, and spilt his waterpot on to the Derbyshire marble chess table, and screamed till the room

rang again, and went on screaming, with Miss Kitty's pocket-handkerchief over his head to keep him quiet, my poor pen can but imperfectly describe.

The desire to atone for the past which had led John Broom to act the part of one of those Good-Fellows who have, we must fear, finally deserted us, will be easily understood. And to a nature of his type, the earning of some self-respect, and of a new character before others, was perhaps a necessary prelude to future well-doing.

He did do well. He became "a good scholar," as farmers were then. He spent as much of his passionate energies on the farm as the farm would absorb, and he restrained the rest. It is not cockatoos only who have sometimes to live and be happy in this unfinished life with one wing clipped.

In fine weather, when the perch was put into the garden, Miss Betty was sometimes startled by stumbling on John Broom in the dusk, sitting on his heels, the unfastened chain in his hand, with his black head lovingly laid against Cocky's white and yellow poll, talking in a low voice, and apparently with the sympathy of his companion; and, as Miss Betty justly feared, of that "other side of the world," which they both knew, and which both at times had cravings to revisit.

Even after the sobering influences of middle age had touched him, and a wife and children bound him with the quiet ties of home, he had (at long intervals) his "restless times," when his good "missis" would bring out a little store laid by in one of the children's socks, and would bid him "Be off, and get a breath of the sea-air," but on condition that the sock went

with him as his purse. John Broom always looked ashamed to go, but he came back the better, and his wife was quite easy in his absence with that confidence in her knowledge of " the master," which is so mysterious to the unmarried, and which Miss Betty looked upon as " want of feeling " to the end. She always dreaded that he would not return, and a little ruse which she adopted of giving him money to make bargains for foreign articles of *vertu* with the sailors, is responsible for many of the choicest ornaments in the Lingborough parlour.

" The sock'll bring him home," said Mrs. Broom, and home he came, and never could say what he had been doing. Nor was the account given by Thomasina's cousin, who was a tide-waiter down yonder, particularly satisfying to the women's curiosity. He said that John Broom was always about ; that he went aboard of all the craft in the bay, and asked whence they came and whither they were bound. That, being once taunted to it, he went up the rigging of a big vessel like a cat, and came down it looking like a fool. That, as a rule, he gossiped and shared his tobacco with sailors and fishermen, and brought out the sock much oftener than was prudent for the benefit of the ragged boys who haunt the quay.

He had two other weaknesses, which a faithful biographer must chronicle.

A regiment on the march would draw him from the plough-tail itself, and " With daddy to see the soldiers " was held to excuse any of Mrs. Broom's children from household duties.

The other shall be described in the graphic language

of that acute observer the farm-bailiff.

"If there cam' an Irish beggar, wi' a stripy cloot roond him and a bellows under 's arm, and ca'd himsel' a Hielander, the lad wad gi'e him his silly head off his shoulders."

As to the farm-bailiff, perhaps no one felt more or said less than he did on John Broom's return. But the tones of his voice had tender associations for the boy's ears as he took off his speckled hat, and after contemplating the inside for some moments, put it on again, and said,—

"Aweel, lad, sae ye've cam hame?"

But he listened with quivering face when John Broom told the story of M'Alister, and when it was ended he rose and went out, and "took the pledge" against drink, and—kept it.

Moved by similar enthusiasm, the cowherd took the pledge also, and if he didn't keep it, he certainly drank less, chiefly owing to the vigilant oversight of the farm-bailiff, who now exercised his natural severity almost exclusively in the denunciation of all liquors whatsoever, from the cowherd's whisky to Thomasina's elder-flower wine.

The plain cousin left his money to the little old ladies, and Lingborough continued to flourish.

Partly perhaps because of this, it is doubtful if John Broom was ever looked upon by the rustics as quite "like other folk."

The favourite version of his history is that he was Lob under the guise of a child; that he was driven away by new clothes; that he returned from unwillingness to see an old family go to ruin "which he had

served for hundreds of years ;" that the parson preached his last Sunday's sermon at him ; and that, having stood that test, he took his place among Christian people.

Whether a name invented off-hand, however plain and sensible, does not stick to a man as his father's does, is a question. But John Broom was not often called by his.

With Scotch caution, the farm-bailiff seldom exceeded the safe title of " Man !" and the parson was apt to address him as " My dear boy " when he had certainly outgrown the designation.

Miss Betty called him John Broom, but the people called him by the name that he had earned.

And long after his black hair lay white and thick on his head, like snow on the old barn roof, and when his dark eyes were dim in an honoured old age, the village children would point him out to each other, crying, " There goes Lob Lie-by-the-fire, the Luck of Lingborough !"

THE GOOSE GREEN

IV. JACKANAPES

CHAPTER I

Two Donkeys and the Geese lived on the Green, and all other residents of any social standing lived in houses round it. The houses had no names. Everybody's address was "The Green," but the Postman and the people of the place knew where each family lived. As to the rest of the world, what has one to do with the rest of the world, when he is safe at home on his own Goose Green? Moreover, if a stranger did come on any lawful business, he might ask his way at the shop.

Most of the inhabitants were long-lived, early deaths (like that of the little Miss Jessamine) being exceptional; and most of the old people were proud of their age, especially the sexton, who would be ninety-nine come Martinmas, and whose father remembered a man who had carried arrows, as a boy, for the battle of Flodden Field. The Grey Goose and the big Miss Jessamine were the only elderly persons who kept their ages secret. Indeed, Miss Jessamine never mentioned any one's age, or recalled the exact year in which anything had happened. She said that she had been taught that it was bad manners to do so "in a mixed assembly."

The Grey Goose also avoided dates, but this was partly because her brain, though intelligent, was not

mathematical, and computation was beyond her. She never got farther than "last Michaelmas," "the Michaelmas before that," and "the Michaelmas before the Michaelmas before that." After this her head, which was small, became confused, and she said "Ga, ga!" and changed the subject.

But she remembered the little Miss Jessamine, the Miss Jessamine with the "conspicuous" hair. Her aunt, the big Miss Jessamine, said it was her only fault. The hair was clean, was abundant, was glossy, but do what you would with it it never looked quite like other people's. And at church, after Saturday night's wash, it shone like the best brass fender after a Spring cleaning. In short, it was conspicuous, which does not become a young woman—especially in church.

Those were worrying times altogether, and the Green was used for strange purposes. A political meeting was held on it with the village Cobbler in the chair, and a speaker who came by stage coach from the town, where they had wrecked the bakers' shops, and discussed the price of bread. He came a second time, by stage, but the people had heard something about him in the meanwhile, and they did not keep him on the Green. They took him to the pond and tried to make him swim, which he could not do, and the whole affair was very disturbing to all quiet and peaceable fowls. After which another man came, and preached sermons on the Green, and a great many people went to hear him; for those were "trying times," and folk ran hither and thither for comfort. And then what did they do but drill the ploughboys on the Green, to get them ready to fight the French, and teach them the goose-step! However,

that came to an end at last, for Bony was sent to St. Helena, and the ploughboys were sent back to the plough.

Everybody lived in fear of Bony in those days, especially the naughty children, who were kept in order during the day by threats of, "Bony shall have you," and who had nightmares about him in the dark. They thought he was an Ogre in a cocked hat. The Grey Goose thought he was a Fox, and that all the men of England were going out in red coats to hunt him. It was no use to argue the point, for she had a very small head, and when one idea got into it there was no room for another.

Besides, the Grey Goose never saw Bony, nor did the children, which rather spoilt the terror of him, so that the Black Captain became more effective as a Bogey with hardened offenders. The Grey Goose remembered *his* coming to the place perfectly. What he came for she did not pretend to know. It was all part and parcel of the war and bad times. He was called the Black Captain, partly because of himself, and partly because of his wonderful black mare. Strange stories were afloat of how far and how fast that mare could go, when her master's hand was on her mane and he whispered in her ear. Indeed, some people thought we might reckon ourselves very lucky if we were not out of the frying-pan into the fire, and had not got a certain well-known Gentleman of the Road to protect us against the French. But that, of course, made him none the less useful to the Johnsons' Nurse, when the little Miss Johnsons were naughty.

"You leave off crying this minnit, Miss Jane, or I'll give you right away to that horrid wicked officer,

Jemima! just look out o' the windy, if you please, and see if the Black Cap'n's a-coming with his horse to carry away Miss Jane."

And there, sure enough, the Black Captain strode by, with his sword clattering as if it did not know whose head to cut off first. But he did not call for Miss Jane that time. He went on to the Green, where he came so suddenly upon the eldest Master Johnson, sitting in a puddle on purpose, in his new nankeen skeleton suit, that the young gentleman thought judgment had overtaken him at last, and abandoned himself to the howlings of despair. His howls were redoubled when he was clutched from behind and swung over the Black Captain's shoulder, but in five minutes his tears were staunched, and he was playing with the officer's accoutrements. All of which the Grey Goose saw with her own eyes, and heard afterwards that that bad boy had been whining to go back to the Black Captain ever since, which showed how hardened he was, and that nobody but Bonaparte himself could be expected to do him any good.

But those were "trying times." It was bad enough when the pickle of a large and respectable family cried for the Black Captain; when it came to the little Miss Jessamine crying for him, one felt that the sooner the French landed and had done with it the better.

The big Miss Jessamine's objection to him was that he was a soldier, and this prejudice was shared by all the Green. "A soldier," as the speaker from the town had observed, "is a bloodthirsty, unsettled sort of a rascal; that the peaceable, home-loving, bread-winning citizen can never conscientiously look on as a brother,

till he has beaten his sword into a ploughshare, and his spear into a pruning hook."

On the other hand there was some truth in what the Postman (an old soldier) said in reply; that the sword has to cut a way for us out of many a scrape into which our bread winners get us when they drive their ploughshares into fallows that don't belong to them. Indeed, whilst our most peaceful citizens were prosperous chiefly by means of cotton, of sugar, and of the rise and fall of the money market (not to speak of such saleable matters as opium, firearms, and "black ivory"), disturbances were apt to arise in India, Africa, and other outlandish parts, where the fathers of our domestic race were making fortunes for their families. And, for that matter, even on the Green, we did not wish the military to leave us in the lurch, so long as there was any fear that the French were coming.[1]

To let the Black Captain have little Miss Jessamine, however, was another matter. Her aunt would not hear of it; and then, to crown all, it appeared that the Captain's father did not think the young lady good enough for his son. Never was any affair more clearly brought to a conclusion.

But those were "trying times"; and one moonlight night, when the Grey Goose was sound asleep upon one

1 "The political men declare war, and generally for commercial interests; but when the nation is thus embroiled with its neighbours the soldier . . . . draws the sword, at the command of his country . . . . One word as to thy comparison of military and commercial persons. What manner of men be they who have supplied the Caffres with the firearms and ammunition to maintain their savage and deplorable wars? Assuredly they are not military. . . Cease then, if thou would'st be counted among the just, to vilify soldiers."—W. Napier, Lieut.-General, *November*, 1851.

leg, the Green was rudely shaken under her by the thud of a horse's feet. "Ga, ga!" said she, putting down the other leg, and running away.

By the time she returned to her place not thing a was to be seen or heard. The horse had passed like a shot. But next day, there was hurrying and skurrying and cackling at a very early hour, all about the white house with the black beams, where Miss Jessamine lived. And when the sun was so low, and the shadows so long on the grass that the Grey Goose felt ready to run away at the sight of her own neck, little Miss Jane Johnson, and her "particular friend" Clarinda, sat under the big oak tree on the Green, and Jane pinched Clarinda's little finger till she found that she could keep a secret, and then she told her in confidence that she had heard from Nurse and Jemima that Miss Jessamine's niece had been a very naughty girl, and that that horrid wicked officer had come for her on his black horse, and carried her right away.

"Will she never come back?" asked Clarinda.

"Oh, no!" said Jane decidedly. "Bony never brings people back."

"Not never no more?" sobbed Clarinda, for she was weak-minded, and could not bear to think that Bony never never let naughty people go home again.

Next day Jane had heard more

"He has taken her to a Green."

"A Goose Green?" asked Clarinda

"No. A Gretna Green. Don't ask so many questions, child," said Jane; who, having no more to tell, gave herself airs.

Jane was wrong on one point Miss Jessamine's

niece did come back, and she and her husband were forgiven. The Grey Goose remembered it well, it was Michaelmastide, the Michaelmas before the Michaelmas before the Michaelmas—but, ga, ga! What does the date matter? It was autumn, harvest-time, and everybody was so busy prophesying and praying about the crops, that the young couple wandered through the lanes, and got blackberries for Miss Jessamine's celebrated crab and blackberry jam, and made guys of themselves with bryony-wreaths, and not a soul troubled his head about them, except the children, and the Postman. The children dogged the Black Captain's footsteps (his bubble reputation as an Ogre having burst), clamouring for a ride on the black mare. And the Postman would go somewhat out of his postal way to catch the Captain's dark eye, and show that he had not forgotten how to salute an officer.

But they were "trying times." One afternoon the black mare was stepping gently up and down the grass, with her head at her master's shoulder, and as many children crowded on to her silky back as if she had been an elephant in a menagerie; and the next afternoon she carried him away, sword and *sabretache* clattering war-music at her side, and the old Postman waiting for them, rigid with salutation, at the four cross roads.

War and bad times! It was a hard winter, and the big Miss Jessamine and the little Miss Jessamine (but she was Mrs. Black-Captain now) lived very economically that they might help their poorer neighbours. They neither entertained nor went into company, but the young lady always went up the village as far as the *George and Dragon* for air and exercise when the London

Mail[1] came in.

One day (it was a day in the following June) it came in earlier than usual, and the young lady was not there to meet it.

But a crowd soon gathered round the *George and Dragon*, gaping to see the Mail Coach dressed with flowers and oak-leaves, and the guard wearing a laurel-wreath over and above his royal livery. The ribbons that decked the horses were stained and flecked with the warmth and foam of the pace at which they had come, for they had pressed on with the news of Victory.

Miss Jessamine was sitting with her niece under the oak tree on the Green, when the Postman put a newspaper silently into her hand Her niece turned quickly—

"Is there news?"

"Don't agitate yourself, my dear" said her aunt. "I will read it aloud and then we can enjoy it together; a far more comfortable method, my love, than when you go up the village, and come home out of breath, having snatched half the news as you run."

"I am all attention, dear aunt," said the little lady, clasping her hands tightly on her lap.

Then Miss Jessamine read aloud—she was proud of her reading—and the old soldier stood at attention behind her, with such a blending of pride and pity on his face as it was strange to see:—

1 "The Mail Coach it was that distributed over the face of the land, like the opening of apocalyptic vials, the heart-shaking news of Tratalgar, of Salamanca, of Vittoria, of Waterloo . . . . . The grandest chapter of our experience, within the whole Mail Coach service, was on those occasions when we went down from London with the news of Victory. Five years of life it was worth paying down for the privilege of an outside place."—De Quincey.

"DOWNING STREET,
"June 22, 1815, 1 A.M.

"That's one in the morning, gasped the Postman; "beg your pardon, mum."

But though he apologized, he could not refrain from echoing here and there a weighty word. "Glorious victory,"—"Two hundred pieces of artillery,"—"Immense quantity of ammunition,"—and so forth

"The loss of the British Army upon this occasion has unfortunately been most severe. It had not been possible to make out a return of the killed and wounded when Major Percy left headquarters. The names of the officers killed and wounded, as far as they can be collected, are annexed.

"I have the honour———"

"The list, Aunt! Read the list!"

"My love—my darling—let us go in and——

"No. Now! now!"

To one thing the supremely afflicted are entitled in their sorrow—to be obeyed—and yet it is the last kind ness that people commonly will do them. But Miss Jessamine did. Steadying her voice, as best she might, she read on, and the old soldier stood bareheaded to hear that first Roll of the Dead at Waterloo, which began with the Duke of Brunswick, and ended with Ensign Brown.[1] Five-and-thirty British Captains fell asleep that day on the Bed of Honour, and the Black Captain slept among them

* * * *

There are killed and wounded by war, of whom no returns reach Downing Street.

1 "Brunswick fated chieftain" fell at Quatre Bras, the day before Waterloo, but this first (very imperfect) list, as it appeared in the newspapers of the day, did begin with his name and end with that of an Ensign Brown.

Three days later, the Captain's wife had joined him, and Miss Jessamine was kneeling by the cradle of their orphan son, a purple-red morsel of humanity, with conspicuously golden hair.

"Will he live, Doctor?"

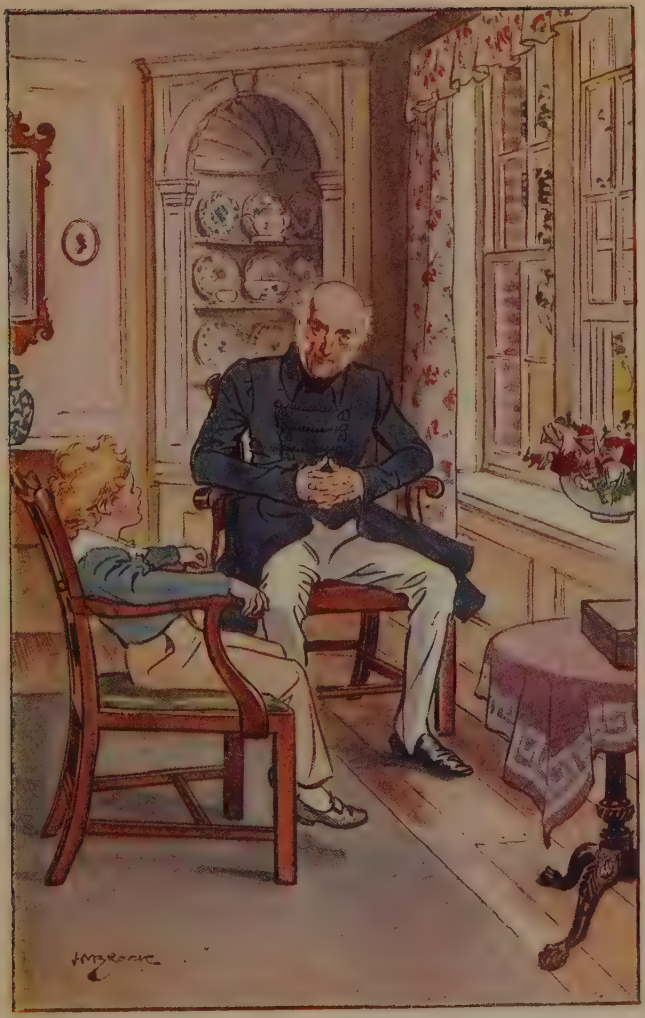
"Live? GOD bless my soul, ma'am! Look at him! The young Jackanapes!"

CHAPTER II

"And he wandered away and away
With Nature, the dear old Nurse."
LONGFELLOW.

THE Grey Goose remembered quite well the year that Jackanapes began to walk, for it was the year that the speckled hen for the first time in all her motherly life got out of patience when she was sitting. She had been rather proud of the eggs—they were unusually large—but she never felt quite comfortable on them; and whether it was because she used to get cramp, and go off the nest, or because the season was bad, or what, she never could tell, but every egg was addled but one, and the one that did hatch gave her more trouble than any chick she had ever reared.

It was a fine, downy, bright yellow little thing, but it had a monstrous big nose and feet, and such an ungainly walk as she knew no other instance of in her well-bred and high-stepping family. And as to behaviour, it was not that it was either quarrelsome or moping, but simply unlike the rest. When the other chicks hopped and cheeped on the Green about their mother's feet, this solitary yellow brat went waddling off on its



"JACKANAPES LEANED BACK IN HIS ARM-CHAIR."

(*See* p. 105)

own responsibility, and do or cluck what the speckled hen would, it went to play in the Pond.

It was off one day as usual, and the hen was fussing and fuming after it, when the Postman, going to deliver a letter at Miss Jessamine's door, was nearly knocked over by the good lady herself, who, bursting out of the house with her cap just off, and her bonnet just not on, fell into his arms, crying—

"Baby! Baby! Jackanapes! Jackanapes!"

If the Postman loved anything on earth, he loved the Captain's yellow-haired child, so propping Miss Jessamine against her own door-post, he followed the direction of her trembling fingers and made for the Green.

Jackanapes had had the start of the Postman by nearly ten minutes. The world—the round green world with an oak tree on it—was just becoming very interesting to him. He had tried, vigorously but ineffectually, to mount a passing pig the last time he was taken out walking; but then he was encumbered with a nurse. Now he was his own master, and might, by courage and energy, become the master of that delightful, downy, dumpy, yellow thing that was bobbing along over the green grass in front of him. Forward! Charge! He aimed well, and grabbed it, but only to feel the delicious downiness and dumpiness slipping through his fingers as he fell upon his face. "Quawk!" said the yellow thing, and wobbled off sideways. It was this oblique movement that enabled Jackanapes to come up with it, for it was bound for the Pond, and therefore obliged to come back into line. He failed again from top-heaviness, and his prey escaped sideways as before, and, as before, lost ground in getting back to the direct road

to the Pond.

And at the Pond the Postman found them both, one yellow thing rocking safely on the ripples that lie beyond duck-weed, and the other washing his draggled frock with tears, because he too had tried to sit upon the Pond, and it wouldn't hold him.

Jackanapes' boyhood was equally adventurous, as the following extract from Chapter III shows.

It was after the Fair that Jackanapes, out rambling by himself, was knocked over by the Gipsy's son riding the Gipsy's red-haired pony at break-neck pace across the common.

Jackanapes got up and shook himself, none the worse, except for being heels over head in love with the red-haired pony. What a rate he went at! How he spurned the ground with his nimble feet! How his red coat shone in the sunshine! And what bright eyes peeped out of his dark forelock as it was blown by the wind!

The Gipsy boy had had a fright, and he was willing enough to reward Jackanapes for not having been hurt, by consenting to let him have a ride.

"Do you mean to kill the little fine gentleman, and swing us all on the gibbet, you rascal?" screamed the Gipsy-mother, who came up just as Jackanapes and the pony set off.

"He would get on," replied her son. "It'll not kill him. He'll fall on his yellow head, and it's as tough as a cocoa-nut."

But Jackanapes did not fall. He stuck to the red-haired pony as he had stuck to the hobby-horse; but oh, how different the delight of this wild gallop with

flesh and blood! Just as his legs were beginning to feel as if he did not feel them, the Gipsy boy cried "Lollo!" Round went the pony so unceremoniously, that, with as little ceremony, Jackanapes clung to his neck, and he did not properly recover himself before Lollo stopped with a jerk at the place where they had started.

"'Is his name Lollo?" asked Jackanapes, his hand lingering in the wiry mane.

"Yes."

"What does Lollo mean?"

"Red."

"Is Lollo your pony?"

"No. My father's." And the Gipsy boy led Lollo away.

At the first opportunity Jackanapes stole away again to the common. This time he saw the Gipsy-father, smoking a dirty pipe.

"Lollo is your pony, isn't he?" said Jackanapes.

"Yes."

"He's a very nice one."

"He's a racer."

"You don't want to sell him, do you?"

"Fifteen pounds," said the Gipsy-father; and Jackanapes sighed and went home again. That very afternoon he and his friend Tony rode the two donkeys, and Tony managed to get thrown, and even Jackanapes' donkey kicked. But it was jolting, clumsy work after the elastic swiftness and the dainty mischief of the red-haired pony.

A few days later Miss Jessamine spoke very seriously to Jackanapes. She was a good deal agitated as she told him that his Grandfather the General was coming

to the Green, and that he must be on his very best behaviour during the visit. If it had been feasible to leave off calling him Jackanapes and to get used to his baptismal name of Theodore before the day after to-morrow (when the General was due), it would have been satisfactory. But Miss Jessamine feared it would be impossible in practice, and she had scruples about it on principle. It would not seem quite truthful, although she had always most fully intended that he should be called Theodore when he had outgrown the ridiculous appropriateness of his nickname. The fact was that he had not outgrown it, but he must take care to remember who was meant when his grandfather said Theodore.

Indeed for that matter he must take care all along.

"You are apt to be giddy, Jackanapes," said Miss Jessamine.

"Yes, Aunt," said Jackanapes.

"You are a good boy, Jackanapes. Thank God, I can tell your grandfather that. An obedient boy, an honourable boy, and a kind-hearted boy. But you are—in short, you *are* a Boy, Jackanapes. And I hope" —added Miss Jessamine, desperate with the results of experience—"that the General knows that Boys will be Boys."

What mischief could be foreseen, Jackanapes promised to guard against. He was to keep his clothes and his hands clean, to look over his catechism, not to put sticky things in his pockets, to keep that hair of his smooth—("It's the wind that blows it, Aunty," said Jackanapes—"I'll send by the coach for some bear's-grease," said Miss Jessamine, tying a knot in her pocket

handkerchief)—not to burst in at the parlour-door, not to talk at the top of his voice, not to crumple his Sunday frill, and to sit quite quiet during the sermon, to be sure to say "sir" to the General, to be careful about rubbing his shoes on the door-mat, and to bring his lesson-books to his aunt at once that she might iron down the dogs' ears. The General arrived, and for the first day all went well, except that Jackanapes' hair was as wild as usual, for the hair-dresser had no bear's-grease left. He began to feel more at ease with his grandfather, and disposed to talk confidentially with him, as he did with the Postman. All that the General felt it would take too long to tell, but the result was the same. He was disposed to talk confidentially with Jackanapes.

"Mons'ous pretty place this," he said, looking out of the lattice on to the Green, where the grass was vivid with sunset, and the shadows were long and peaceful.

"You should see it in Fair-week, sir," said Jackanapes, shaking his yellow mop, and leaning back in his one of the two Chippendale arm-chairs in which they sat.

"A fine time that, eh?" said the General, with a twinkle in his left eye. (The other was glass).

Jackanapes shook his hair once more. "I enjoyed this last one the best of all," he said. "I'd so much money."

"By George, it's not a common complaint in these bad times. How much had ye?"

"I'd two shillings. A new shilling Aunty gave me, and elevenpence I had saved up, and a penny from the Postman—*sir*!" added Jackanapes with a jerk, having

forgotten it

"And how did ye spend it—*sir*?" inquired the General.

Jackanapes spread his ten fingers on the arms of his chair, and shut his eyes that he might count the more conscientiously.

"Watch-stand for Aunty, threepence. Trumpet for myself, twopence, that's fivepence. Ginger-nuts for Tony, twopence, and a mug with a Grenadier on for the Postman, fourpence, that's elevenpence. Shooting-gallery a penny, that's a shilling. Giddy-go-round, a penny, that's one and a penny. Treating Tony, one and twopence. Flying Boats (Tony paid for himself), a penny, one and threepence. Shooting-gallery again, one and fourpence. Fat Woman, a penny, one and fivepence. Giddy-go-round again, one and sixpence. Shooting-gallery, one and sevenpence. Treating Tony, and then he wouldn't shoot, so I did, one and eightpence. Living Skeleton, a penny—no, Tony treated me, the Living Skeleton doesn't count. Skittles, a penny, one and ninepence. Mermaid (but when we got inside she was dead), a penny, one and tenpence. Theatre, a penny ('Priscilla Partington, or the Green Lane Murder.' A beautiful young lady, sir, with pink cheeks and a real pistol), that's one and elevenpence. Ginger-beer, a penny (I *was* so thirsty!), two shillings. And then the Shooting-gallery man gave me a turn for nothing, because, he said, I was a real gentleman, and spent my money like a man."

"So you do, sir, so you do!" cried the General. "Why sir, you spend it like a prince. And now I suppose you've not got a penny in your pocket?"

"Yes, I have," said Jackanapes. "Two pennies. They are saving up." And Jackanapes jingled them with his hand.

"You don't want money except at Fair-times, I suppose?" said the General.

Jackanapes shook his mop.

"If I could have as much as I want, I should know what to buy," said he.

"And how much do you want, if you could get it?"

"Wait a minute, sir, till I think what twopence from fifteen pounds leaves. Two from nothing you can't, but borrow twelve. Two from twelve, ten, and carry one. Please remember ten, sir, when I ask you. One from nothing you can't, borrow twenty. One from twenty, nineteen, and carry one. One from fifteen, fourteen. Fourteen pounds nineteen and—what did I tell you to remember?"

"Ten," said the General.

"Fourteen pounds nineteen shillings and tenpence then, is what I want," said Jackanapes.

"Bless my soul, what for?"

"To buy Lollo with. Lollo means red, sir. The Gipsy's red-haired pony, sir. Oh, he *is* beautiful! You should see his coat in the sunshine! You should see his mane! You should see his tail! Such little feet, sir, and they go like lightning! Such a dear face, too, and eyes like a mouse! But he's a racer, and the Gipsy wants fifteen pounds for him."

"If he's a racer, you couldn't ride him. Could you?"

"No—o, sir, but I can stick to him. I did the other day."

"You did, did you? Well, I'm fond of riding myself,

and if the beast is as good as you say, he might suit me."

"You're too tall for Lollo, I think," said Jackanapes, measuring his grandfather with his eye.

"I can double up my legs, I suppose. We'll have a look at him to-morrow."

"Don't you weigh a good deal?" asked Jackanapes.

"Chiefly waistcoats," said the General, slapping the breast of his military frock-coat. "We'll have the little racer on the Green the first thing in the morning. Glad you mentioned it, grandson. Glad you mentioned it."

The General was as good as his word. Next morning the Gipsy and Lollo, Miss Jessamine, Jackanapes and his grandfather and his dog Spitfire, were all gathered at one end of the Green in a group, which so aroused the innocent curiosity of Mrs. Johnson, as she saw it from one of her upper windows, that she and the children took their early promenade rather earlier than usual. The General talked to the Gipsy, and Jackanapes fondled Lollo's mane, and did not know whether he should be glad or miserable if his grandfather bought him.

"Jackanapes!"

"Yes, sir!"

"I've bought Lollo, but I believe you were right. He hardly stands high enough for me. If you can ride him to the other end of the Green, I'll give him to you."

How Jackanapes tumbled on to Lollo's back he never knew. He had just gathered up the reins when the Gipsy-father took him by the arm.

"If you want to make Lollo go fast, my little gentleman———"

"*I* can make him go!" said Jackanapes, and drawing

"Away went Lollo."

from his pocket the trumpet he had bought in the Fair, he blew a blast both loud and shrill.

Away went Lollo, and away went Jackanapes' hat. His golden hair flew out, an aureole from which his cheeks shone red and distended with trumpeting. Away went Spitfire, mad with the rapture of the race, and the wind in his silky ears. Away went the geese, the cocks, the hens, and the whole family of Johnson. Lucy clung to her mamma, Jane saved Emily by the gathers of her gown, and Tony saved himself by a somersault.

The Grey Goose was just returning when Jackanapes and Lollo rode back, Spitfire panting behind.

"Good, my little gentleman, good!" said the Gipsy. "You were born to the saddle. You've the flat thigh, the strong knee, the wiry back, and the light caressing hand; all you want is to learn the whisper. Come here!"

"What was that dirty fellow talking about, grandson?" asked the General.

"I can't tell you, sir. It's a secret."

They were sitting in the window again, in the two Chippendale arm-chairs, the General devouring every line of his grandson's face, with strange spasms crossing his own.

"You must love your aunt very much, Jackanapes?"

"I do, sir," said Jackanapes warmly

"And whom do you love next best to your aunt?"

The ties of blood were pressing very strongly on the General himself, and perhaps he thought of Lollo. But Love is not bought in a day, even with fourteen pounds nineteen shillings and tenpence. Jackanapes answered

quite readily, "The Postman."

"Why the Postman?"

"He knew my father," said Jackanapes, "and he tells me about him, and about his black mare. My father was a soldier, a brave soldier. He died at Waterloo. When I grow up I want to be a soldier too."

"So you shall, my boy. So you shall."

"Thank you, Grandfather. Aunty doesn't want me to be a soldier for fear of being killed."

"Bless my life! Would she have you get into a feather-bed and stay there? Why, you might be killed by a thunderbolt, if you were a butter-merchant!"

"So I might. I shall tell her so. What a funny fellow you are, sir! I say, do you think my father knew the Gipsy's secret? The Postman says he used to whisper to his black mare."

"Your father was taught to ride as a child, by one of those horsemen of the East who swoop and dart and wheel about a plain like swallows in autumn. Grandson! love me a little too. I can tell you more about your father than the Postman can."

"I do love you," said Jackanapes. "Before you came I was frightened. I'd no notion you were so nice."

"Love me always, boy, whatever I do or leave undone. And —GOD help me—whatever you do or leave undone, I'll love you! There shall never be a cloud between us for a day; no, sir, not for an hour. We're imperfect enough, all of us, we needn't be so bitter; and life is uncertain enough at its safest, we needn't waste its opportunities. Look at me! Here sit I, after a dozen battles and some of the worst climates in the world, and by yonder lych-gate lies your mother, who didn't

move five miles, I suppose, from your aunt's apron-strings,—dead in her teens; my golden-haired daughter, whom I never saw."

Jackanapes was terribly troubled.

"Don't cry, Grandfather," he pleaded, his own blue eyes round with tears. "I will love you very much, and I will try to be very good. But I should like to be a soldier."

"You shall, my boy, you shall. You've more claims for a commission than you know of. Cavalry, I suppose; eh, ye young Jackanapes? Well, well; if you live to be an honour to your country, this old heart shall grow young again with pride for you; and if you die in the service of your country—GOD bless me, it can but break for ye!"

And beating the region which he said was all waistcoats, as if they stifled him, the old man got up and strode out on to the Green.

Jackanapes became a fine soldier and died nobly giving his life for his friend.

V.

MRS. OVERTHEWAY'S REMEMBRANCES

IDA

The little old lady lived over the way, through a green gate that shut with a click, and up three white steps. Every morning at eight o'clock the church bell chimed for Morning Prayer—chim! chime! chim! chime!—and every morning at eight o'clock the little old lady came down the white steps, and opened the gate with a click, and went where the bells were calling.

About this time little Ida would kneel on a chair at her nursery window in the opposite house to watch the old lady come out and go. The old lady was one of those people who look always the same. Every morning her cheeks looked like faded rose leaves, and her white hair like a snow-wreath in a garden laughing at the last tea-rose. Every morning she wore the same black satin bonnet, and the same white shawl; had delicate gloves on the smallest of hands, and gathered her skirt daintily up from the smallest of feet. Every morning she carried a clean pocket-handkerchief, and a fresh rose in the same hand with her Prayer-book; and as the Prayer-book being bound up with the Bible was very thick, she seemed to have some difficulty in so doing. Every morning, whatever the weather might be, she stood outside the green gate, and looked up at

the sky to see if this were clear, and down at the ground to see if that were dry; and so went where the bells were calling.

Ida knew the little old lady quite well by sight, but she did not know her name. Perhaps Ida's great-uncle knew it; but he was a grave, unsociable man, who saw very little of his neighbours, so perhaps he did not; and Ida stood too much in awe of him to trouble him with idle questions. She had once asked Nurse, but Nurse did not know; so the quiet orphan child asked no more. She made up a name for the little old lady herself, however, after the manner of Mr. John Bunyan, and called her Mrs. Overtheway; and morning after morning, though the bread-and-milk breakfast smoked upon the table, she would linger at the window, beseeching——

"One minute more, dear Nurse! Please let me wait till Mrs. Overtheway has gone to church."

And when the little old lady had come out and gone, Ida would creep from her perch, and begin her breakfast. Then, if the chimes went on till half the basinful was eaten, little Ida would nod her head contentedly, and whisper:

"Mrs. Overtheway was in time."

Little Ida's history was a sad one. Her troubles began when she was but a year old, with the greatest of earthly losses—for then her mother died, leaving a sailor husband and their infant child. The sea-captain could face danger, but not an empty home; so he went back to the winds and the waves, leaving his little daughter with relations. Six long years had he been away, and Ida had had many homes, and yet, somehow,

no home, when one day the postman brought her a large letter, with her own name written upon it in a large hand. This was no old envelope sealed up again—no make-believe epistle to be put into the post through the nursery door; it was a real letter, with a real seal, real stamps, and a great many post-marks; and when Ida opened it there were two sheets written by the Captain's very own hand, in round fat characters, easy to read, with a sketch of the Captain's very own ship at the top, and—most welcome above all!—the news that the Captain's very own self was coming home.

"I shall have a papa all to myself very soon, Nurse," said Ida. "He has written a letter to me, and made me a picture of his ship; it is the Bonne Esperance, which he says means Good Hope. I love this letter better than anything he has ever sent me."

Nevertheless, Ida took out the carved fans and work-boxes, the beads and handkerchiefs and feathers, the dainty foreign treasures the sailor-father had sent to her from time to time; dusted them, kissed them, and told them that the Captain was coming home. But the letter she wore in her pocket by day, and kept under her pillow by night.

"Why don't you put your letter into one of your boxes, like a tidy young lady, Miss Ida?" said Nurse. "You'll wear it all to bits doing as you do."

"It will last till the ship comes home," said Miss Ida.

It had need then to have been written on the rock, graven with an iron pen for ever; for the Bonne Esperance (like other earthly hopes) had perished to return no more. She foundered on her homeward voyage, and went down into the great waters, whilst Ida slept

through the stormy night, with the Captain's letter beneath her pillow.

Alas! Alas! Alas!

* * * *

The lonely little orphan spent a great deal of time watching the little old lady's movements as she went daily to worship, and reflecting on what happened behind the closed doors of the house opposite. She noticed that as Winter approached Mrs. Overtheway had not her usual flower and it was in her effort to secure the first primroses of Spring for her that she caught a chill and became seriously ill. Ida's convalescence was brightened by the little old lady who visited her and told her tale after tale, the last of which was "Kerguelen's Land," in which dear old Mrs. Overtheway seeks to tell the lonely little Ida that her father still lives and will come back to her.

KERGUELEN'S LAND

"FATHER Albatross had been out all day, and was come home to the island which gives its name to this story. He had only taken a short flight, for his wife was hatching an egg, and he kept comparatively near the island where her nest was situated. There was only one egg, but parental affection is not influenced by numbers. There is always love enough for the largest family, and everything that could be desired in an only child, and Mother Albatross was as proud as if she had been a hen sitting on a dozen.

"The Father Albatross was very considerate. Not only did he deny himself those long flights which he and his mate had before so greatly enjoyed, but he

generally contrived to bring back from his shorter trips some bits of news for her amusement. Their island home lay far out of the common track of ships, but sometimes he sighted a distant vessel, and he generally found something to tell of birds or fish, whales or water-spouts, icebergs or storms. When there was no news he discussed the winds and waves, as we talk of the weather and the crops.

"Bits of news, like misfortunes, are apt to come together. The very day on which the egg hatched, Father Albatross returned from his morning flight so full of what he had seen, that he hardly paid any attention to his mate's announcement of the addition to his family.

"'Could you leave the nest for a quarter of an hour, my dear?' he asked.

"'Certainly not,' said Mother Albatross; 'as I have told you, the egg is hatched at last.'

"'These things always happen at the least convenient moments,' said the father bird. 'There's a ship within a mere wing-stretch, untold miles out of her course, and going down. I came away just as she was sinking, that you might have a chance of seeing her. It is a horrible sight.'

"'It must be terrible to witness,' she replied, 'and I would give worlds to see it; but a mother's first duty is the nest, and it is quite impossible for me to move. At the same time I beg that you will return, and see whatever there is to be seen.'

"'It is not worth while,' he answered; 'there was not a moment to lose, and by this time she must be at the bottom with all belonging to her.'

"'Could none of them fly away?' the Mother Albatross asked.

"'No men have wings,' replied her mate, 'nor, for that matter, fins or scales either. They are very curious creatures. The fancy they have for wandering about between sea and sky, when Nature has not enabled them to support themselves in either, is truly wonderful. Go where you will over the ocean you meet men, as you meet fish and birds. Then if anything disables these ships that they contrive to go about in, down they go, and as the men can neither float nor fly, they sink to the bottom like so many stones.'

"'Were there many on the ship you saw?' the mother bird asked.

"'More than one likes to see drowned in a batch,' said Father Albatross; 'and I feel most sorry for the captain. He was a fine fellow, with bright eyes and dark curly plumage, and would have been a handsome creature if he had had wings. He was going about giving orders with desperate and vain composure, and wherever he went there went with him a large dog with dark bright curls like his own. I have seen the ship before, and I know the dog. His name is Carlo. He is the captain's property, and the ship's pet. Usually he is very quiet, and sometimes, when it blows, he is ill; but as a rule he lay on the deck, blinking with the most self-sufficient air you can imagine. However, to-day, from the moment that danger was imminent, he seemed to be aware of it, and to have only one idea on the subject, to keep close to his master. He got in front of him as he moved about, sat down at his feet when he stood still, jumped on him when he shouted

his orders, and licked his hands when he seized the ropes. In fact, he was most troublesome. But what can you expect of a creature that requires four legs to go about with, and can't rise above the earth even with these, and doesn't move as many yards in a day as I go miles in an hour? He *can* swim, but only for a certain length of time. However, he is probably quiet enough now; and perhaps some lucky chance has rolled him to his master's feet below the sea.'

"'Have men no contrivance for escaping on these occasions?' the mother bird inquired.

"'They have boats, into which they go when the ship will hold them no longer. It is much as if you should put out the little one to fly in a storm, against which your own wings failed.'

"'Perhaps the boats are in good order when the ship is not,' said Mother Albatross, who had a practical gift. 'Were there boats to this one?'

"'There were. I saw one lowered, and quickly filled with men, eager to snatch this last chance of life.'

"'Was the captain in it?' she asked.

"'No. He stayed on the ship and gave orders. The dog stayed with him. Another boat was lowered and filled just as the ship went down.'

"'Was the captain in it?'

"'Again, no. He stayed with the vessel and some others with him. They were just sinking as I came for you. With the last glance I gave I saw the captain standing quite still near the wheel. The dog was sitting on his feet. They were both looking in one direction—away over the sea. But why should you distress yourself? It is all over long since. Think of the little one,

and let us be thankful that we belong to a superior race. We might have been born without wings, like poor sailors.'

"'I cannot help grieving for the captain,' said Mother Albatross. 'When you spoke of his bright eyes and handsome plumage I thought of you; and how should I feel if you were to die? I wish he had gone in the boats.'

"'I doubt if he would have fared better,' said the father bird. 'The second boat must have been swamped in the sinking of the ship; and it is far from probable that the other will get to land.'

"'Nevertheless, I hope you will fly in that direction to-morrow,' she said, 'and bring me word whether there are any traces of the catastrophe.'

"'The following morning Father Albatross set forth as he was desired. The ship had foundered quite near to the other side of the island, and including a little excursion to see if the first boat were still above water, he expected to be back very shortly.

"He returned even sooner than the Mother Albatross had hoped, and descended to the side of their nest with as much agitation as his majestic form was capable of displaying.

"'Wonders will never cease!' he exclaimed. 'What do you think are on the island?'

"'I couldn't guess if I were to try from now till next hatching season,' said his mate; 'and I beg you will not keep me in suspense. I am not equal to the slightest trial of the nerves. It is quite enough to be a mother.'

"'The captain and one or two more men are here,' said the Albatross. "What do you think of that?

You will be able to see him for yourself, and to show the youngster what men are like into the bargain. It's very strange how they have escaped; and that lazy, self-sufficient dog is with them.'

"'I cannot possibly leave our young one at present,' said the Mother Albatross, 'and he certainly cannot get so far. It will be very provoking if the men leave the island before I can see them.'

"'There is not much fear of that,' her mate answered. 'A lucky wave has brought them to shore, but it will take a good many lucky waves to bring a ship to carry them home.'

"Father Albatross was right; but his mate saw the strangers sooner than she expected. Her nest, though built on the ground, was on the highest point of the island, and to this the shipwrecked men soon made their way; and there the Mother Albatross had ample chance of seeing the bright eyes of the captain as they scanned the horizon line with keen anxiety. Presently they fell upon the bird herself.

"'What splendid creatures they are!' he said to his companion; 'and so grandly fearless. I was never on one of these islands where they breed before. What a pity it is they cannot understand one! That fellow there, who is just stretching his noble wings, might take a message and bring us help.'

"'He is a fine creature,' said the Mother Albatross, peeping at the captain from her nest; 'that is, he would be if he had wings, and could speak properly, instead of making that unmusical jabbering like a monkey.'

"'I would give a good deal to one of them for a report of the first boat,' the captain went on. "Heaven

knows I would be content to die here if I could know that it was safe. But I'm afraid—I'm afraid; oh! dear!'

"And the captain paced up and down, the other consoling him.

"'He doesn't seem as tame as one might expect,' said the Mother Albatross, 'he's so restless. But possibly he is hungry.'

"Truly it was a great amusement for the mother bird to watch the strangers from her nest, and to question her mate on their peculiarities.

"'What is he doing now?'" she asked on one occasion, when the captain was reading a paper which he had taken from the note-book in his pocket.

"'That is a letter,' said the Father Albatross. 'And from the look of it I gather that, like ourselves, he has got a young one somewhere, wherever his nest may be,

"'How do you gather that?'" his mate inquired.

"'Because the writing is so large,' answered the Father Albatross. 'It is one of the peculiarities of these creatures that the smaller they are the larger they write. That letter is from a young one; probably his own.'

"'Very remarkable indeed,' said the Mother Albatross. 'And what is he doing *now*?'

"'Now he is writing himself,' said her mate; 'and if you observe you will see my statement confirmed. See how much smaller he writes!'

"The captain had indeed torn a sheet from his note-book, and was busy scribbling upon his knees. Whether the sight of papers was a familiar memory with Carlo, or whether he was merely moved by one of those doggish

impulses we so little understand, it is impossible to say; but when the captain began to write, Carlo began to wag his tail, and he wagged it without pause or weariness till the captain had finished, keeping his nearest eye half open, and fixed upon the paper and the captain's moving hand. Once he sat up on his haunches and put his nose on the letter.

"'That is right, old fellow, kiss it,' said the captain. 'I am just telling her about you. Heaven send she may ever read it, poor child!'

"At this Carlo became so frantic, and so persistent in pushing his nose on to the paper, that the captain was fain to pocket his writing materials, and have a game at play with the 'ship's dog,' in which the latter condescendingly joined for a few minutes, and then lay down as before, shutting his eyes with an air which seemed to imply—

"'I see, poor fellow, you don't understand me.'

"The hardships endured by this small remnant of the ship's company were not very great. They managed to live. The weather was fine, and they did not at first trouble themselves about any permanent shelter. Perhaps, too, in spite of their seaman's knowledge of the position they were in, some dim hope of a ship out of her course as they had been, picking them off, buoyed them up with the fancy that 'it was not worth while.' But no ship appeared; and they built themselves a hut near the albatross's nest, and began to talk of other seasons, and provision for the future. They kept a look-out by turns through the daylight, and by night when the moon and stars made the distance visible. Every morning the sun rising above the sea met the

captain's keen eyes scanning the horizon, and every evening that closed a day's fruitless watch, the sun going down saw the captain's brown hands clasped together as he said, 'GOD's will be done!'

"So days became weeks, and weeks ripened into months, and Carlo became used to his new home, and happy in it, and kept watch over his master, and took his ease as usual. But the men's appearance changed, and their clothes began to look shabby. In the first place they were wearing out, and secondly they seemed—as we say—to be 'getting too large' for them, and to hang loosely and untidily upon their gaunt frames. The captain's eyes looked larger and sadder, and his voice grew hollow at sunset, and threads of white began to show among his dark curls, and increased in number day by day.

"'His plumage will be as white as your own very soon,' said the Mother Albatross. 'I suppose it's the climate that does it.'

"'He is getting older,' said her mate: 'men, like ourselves, get white as they get old.'

"'But he has been here so short a time,' said Mother Albatross.

"'He is so much the older, however,' said the father bird, and his mate said no more; for she knew by the tone of his voice when he had got to the end of his available information on any subject, and that beyond this point he did not like to be pressed.

"'It's hard, it's very hard, Captain, and I can't submit as you do,' said one of the men one day. He and the captain were sitting side by side at the look-out,

their elbows on their knees, and their chins upon their hands.

"'And yet it's harder for me than for you,' said the captain. "One must die some day. It's not that. And you are a single man, Barker, without ties.'

"The man stooped down, and taking one of Carlo's long ears in his hand, played absently with it, as he said—

"'No, sir. I am not married, it's true, and have no children. I feel for you, sir, from my heart. But, in a little house just out of Plymouth, that, GOD above knows, I can see this moment as clearly as I see you, there's a girl that has either forgotten me, or is breaking as good a heart as ever beat in woman's breast for the man that should have been her husband, and that's fast bound here upon a rock with sea-birds. The Lord knows best, Captain, but it comes hard. We all have our troubles, sir.'

"The captain laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"'Forgive me,' he said. 'GOD comfort you! GOD bless you!' And, rising hurriedly, he went forward, the big tears breaking over his cheeks, and sea and sky dancing together before his eyes.

"'What do you dream of at night, Barker?' said the captain, on another day.

"'Home, sir,' said Barker.

"'Strange!' said the captain. 'So do I. In all the time we have been here, I have never once dreamed of this island, or of our day's work, nor even of seeing a sail. I dream of England night after night.'

"'It's the same with myself, sir,' said Barker. 'I'm in Plymouth half my time, I may say. And off and on

I dream of my father's old home in Surrey.'

"'Are the men going to change their feathers, do you think?' the Mother Albatross inquired of her mate.

'They have a most wretched appearance. Only the dog looks like himself.' (The first excitement of pity and curiosity had subsided, and the good couple were now naturally inclined to be critical.)

"'I detest that dog,' said Father Albatross. 'His idleness and arrogance make me quite sick. I think I want exercise, too, and I mean to have a good flight to-day;' and, spreading his broad wings, the bird sailed away.

"His excursion did not quite dispel his irritability. When he returned, he settled down by the captain, who was sitting listlessly, as usual, with Carlo at his feet.

"'If you would only exert yourself,' began Father Albatross, 'something might come of it. You are getting as bad as the dog. Spread out those arms of yours, and see what you can do with them! If you could only fly a matter of a few miles, you would see a sail—and that's more than we had any reason to expect.'

"'What can be the matter with the birds to-day?' said the captain, who was in rather an irritable mood himself. 'They are silent enough generally'—for the voice of the albatross is rarely heard at sea.

"'Move your arms, I tell you!' croaked the albatross. 'Up and down—so!—and follow me.'

"'I shall have the dog going at them next,' muttered the captain. 'Come along, Carlo.' And turning his back on Father Albatross, he moved away.

"'He doesn't understand you,' said the Mother

Albatross, who endeavoured, as is proper, to soothe her mate's irritability, and make peace. 'Couldn't you take a message to the ship yourself? It is nothing to your magnificent wings, and it is not his fault, poor creature, that he is not formed like you.'

"'You speak very sensibly, my dear,' said Father Albatross; and once more he took flight over the sea.

"But he returned in even worse mood than before.

"'Nothing can equal the stupidity of human beings,' he observed. 'I addressed myself to the captain. "There's an island with shipwrecked men on it a few miles to the north-east," said I. "We shall see land in about ten days, ma'am," says the captain to a lady on deck. "There's as big a fool as yourself wrecked on an island north-east by north," I cried. "If you had the skill of a sparrow you could see it with your own eyes in five minutes." "It's very remarkable," said the captain, "I never heard one of those albatross make a sound before." "And never will again," said I; "it's a waste of time to talk to you. It won't take long to put you and yours under water like the rest." And away I came.'

"'I don't understand the cry of human beings myself,' said his mate, 'and I'm rather glad I do not; it would only irritate me. Perhaps he did not understand you.'

"'They are all stupid alike,' said the father bird; 'but I have done my best, and shall not disturb myself any more.'

"The captain watched till sunset, and folded his hands, and bent his head as usual, and at last lay down to sleep. He dreamt of England, and of home—of a home that had been his long since, of a young wife, dead

years ago. He dreamt that he lay, at early morning, in a sunny room in a little cottage where they had lived and where, in summer, the morning sun awoke them not much later than the birds. He dreamt that his wife was by him, and that she thought that he was asleep, and that, so thinking, she put her arms round his neck to awaken him—that he lay still, and pretended to be slumbering on, and that, so lying, he saw her face bright with an unearthly beauty, and her eyes fixed on him with such intensity of expression that they held him like a spell. Then he felt her warm face come near to his, and she kissed his cheeks, and he heard her say, 'Wake up, my darling, I have something to show you.' Again she repeated vehemently, 'Awake! Awake! Look! Look!' and then he opened his eyes.

"He was lying at the look-out, and Carlo was licking his face. It was a dream, and yet the voice was strong and clear in his ears, 'Awake! Awake! Look! Look!'

"A heavier hand than his wife's was on his shoulder, and Barker's rough voice (hoarser than usual), repeated the words of his dream.

"The captain's eyes followed the outstretched fingers to the horizon; and then his own voice grew hoarse, as he exclaimed—

"'My God! it is a sail!'"

Ida was not leaning on the little old lady's footstool now. She sat upright, her pale face whiter than its wont.

"*Did* the ship take them away?" she asked eagerly.

"Yes, my dear. Their signals were seen, and the ship took them home to their friends who had believed them to be dead."

"Mrs. Overtheway."

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"Do people who have been drowned—I mean who have been thought to be drowned—ever come home *really*?" the child asked.

"Yes, really. Ida my dear, I want you to remember that, as regards the captain and the crew, this is a true story."

Ida clasped her hands passionately together.

"Oh, Mrs. Overtheway! Do you think papa will ever come home?"

"My child! my dear child!" sobbed the little old lady. "I think he will." . . . .

THE "HEART OF OAK"

VI. JAN OF THE WINDMILL

CHAPTER XXIII

Jan is ignorant of his parentage until the end of the book. One wild night, when a small babe, he is brought by his father and a nurse to the windmill belonging to Mr. Lake. Here he soon takes the place in their affections of the babe that Mr. and Mrs. Lake have lost. Henceforth he is known as Jan Lake, and loved and cared for by his foster parents and particularly by Abel Lake, the most loveable of the miller's children. He shares the life of the mill, the village, the school and the countryside. He soon develops a most exceptional talent for drawing, and the scene in which he is shown drawing pictures of animals to amuse the other children is one of the most charming in the book. Our extract shows him making pictures of coloured leaves in the woods, meeting for the first time Amabel whom he marries later on, and painting the sign for the village Inn.

THE white horse lived to see good days. He got safely home, and spent the winter in a comfortable stable, with no work but being exercised for the good of his health by the stable-boy. It was expensive, but expense was not a first consideration with the Squire, and when he had once decided a matter he was not apt to worry himself with regrets. As to Amabel, the very narrowness of the white horse's escape from death exalted him at once to the place of first favourite in her tender heart. Even over the head (and ears) of the new donkey.

" Miss Amabel's " interest in the cart-horse offended

her nurse's ideas of propriety, and met with no sympathy from her mother or grandmother. But she was apt to get her own way, and from time to time she appeared suddenly, like a fairy-imp, in the stable, where she majestically directed the groom to hold her up whilst she plied a currycomb on the old horse's back. This over, she would ask, with dignity, "Do you take care of him, Miles?" And Miles, touching his cap, would reply, "Certainly, miss; the very greatest of care." And Amabel would add, "Does he get plenty to eat, do you think?" "Plenties to heat, miss," the groom would reply. And she generally closed the conversation with, "I'm very glad. You're a good man, Miles."

In spring the white horse was turned out into the paddock, where Amabel had begged that he might die comfortably. He lived comfortably instead; and Amabel visited him constantly, and being perfectly fearless, would kiss his white nose as he drooped it into her little arms. Her visits to the stable had been discovered and forbidden, but the scandal was even greater when she was found in the paddock, standing on an inverted bucket, and grooming the white horse with Lady Louisa's tortoise-shell dressing-comb.

"They wouldn't let me have the currycomb," said Amabel, who was very hot, and perfectly self-satisfied.

Lady Louisa was in despair, but the Squire laughed. The ladies of his family had been great horsewomen for generations.

In the early summer, some light carting being required by the gardener, he begged leave to employ "Miss Amabel's old horse," who came at last to trot soberly to the town with a light cart for parcels, when the land-

lord of the "Crown" would point him out in proof of the Squire's sagacity in horseflesh.

But it was not by her attachment to the cart-horse alone that Amabel disturbed the composure of the head-nurse, and of Louise, the *bonne*. She was a very Will-o'-the-wisp for wandering. She grew rapidly, and the stronger she grew the more of a Tom-boy she became. Beyond the paddock lay another field, whose farthest wall was the boundary of a little wood—the wood where Jan had herded pigs. Into this wood it had long been Amabel's desire to go. But nurses have a preference for the high road, and object to climbing walls, and she had not had her wish. She had often peeped through a hole in the wall, and had smelt honeysuckle. Once she had climbed half-way up and had fallen on her back in the ditch. Louise uttered a thousand and one exclamations when Amabel came home after this catastrophe, and nurse, distrusting the success of any real penalties in her power, fell back upon imaginary ones.

"I'm sure it's a mercy you have got back, Miss Amabel," said she; "for Bogy lives in that wood; and if you'd got in, it's ten to one he'd have carried you off."

"You *said* Bogy lived in the cellar," said Amabel.

Nurse was in a dilemma which deservedly besets people who tell untruths. She had to invent a second one to help out her first.

"That's at night," said she; "he lives in the wood in the daytime."

"Then I can go into the cellar in the day, and the wood at night," retorted Amabel; but in her heart she knew the latter was impossible.

For some days nurse's fable availed. Amabel had suffered a good deal from Bogy, and though the fear of him did not seem so terrible by daylight, she had no wish to meet him. But one lovely afternoon, wandering round the field to see if the cowslips were out yet, Amabel came to the wall, and could not but peep over to see if there were any flowers to be seen. She was too short to do this without climbing, and it ended in her struggling successfully to the top. There were violets on the other side, and Amabel let down one big foot to a convenient hole, whence she hoped to be able to stoop and catch at the violets without actually treading in Bogy's domain. But once more she slipped and rolled over—this time into the wood. Bogy lingered, and she got on to her feet; but the wall was deeper on this side than the other, and she saw with dismay that it was very doubtful if she could get back.

I think, as a rule, children are very brave. But a light heart goes a long way towards courage. At first Amabel made desperate and knee-grazing efforts to reclimb the wall, and failing burst into tears, and danced, and called aloud on all her protectors, from the Squire to Miles. No one coming, she restrained her tears, and by a real effort of that "pluck" for which the Ammaby race is famous, began to run along the wall to find a lower point for climbing. In doing so she startled a squirrel, and, whizz!—away he went up a lanky tree. What a tail he had! Amabel forgot her terrors. There was, at any rate, some living thing in the wood beside Bogy; and she was now busy trying to coax the squirrel down again by such encouraging noises as she had found successful in winning the con-

fidence of kittens and puppies. Amabel was the victim of that weakness for falling in love with every fussy, intelligent, or pitiable beast she met with, which besets some otherwise reasonable beings, leading to an inconvenient accumulation of pets in private life, though doubtless invaluable in the public services of people connected with the Zoological Gardens.

The squirrel sat under the shadow of his own tail, and winked. He had not the remotest intention of coming down. Amabel was calmer now, and she looked about her. The eglantine bushes were shoulder-high, but she had breasted underwood in the shrubberies, and was not afraid. Up, up stretched the trees to where the sky shone blue. The wood itself sloped downwards; the spotted arums pushed boldly through last year's leaves, which almost hid the violets; there were tufts of primroses, which made Amabel cry out, and about them lay the exquisite mauve dog-violets in unplucked profusion. And hither and thither darted the little birds; redbreasts and sparrows, and yellow finches and blue finches, and blackbirds and thrushes, with their cheerful voices and soft waistcoats, and, indeed, every good quality but that of knowing how glad one would be to kiss them. In a few steps Amabel came upon a path going zig-zag down the steep of the wood, and nodding her hooded head determinedly, she said, "Amabel is going a walk I don't mind Bogy," and followed her nose.

It is a pity that one's skirt, when held up, does not divide itself into compartments like some vegetable dishes. One is so apt to get flowers first, and then lumps of moss, which spoil the flowers, and then more

moss, which, earth downwards (as bread and butter falls), does no good to the rest. Amabel had on a nice new dress, and it held things beautifully. But it did not hold enough, for at each step of the zig-zag path the moss grew lovelier. She had got some extinguisher moss from the top of the wall, and this now lay under all the rest, which flattened the extinguishers. About half-way down the dress was full, and some cushion moss appeared that could not be passed by. Amabel sat down and reviewed her treasures. She could part with nothing, and she had just caught sight of some cup-moss lichen for dolls' wine-glasses. But, by good luck, she was provided with a white sun-bonnet, as clean and whole as her dress; and this she took off and filled. It was less fortunate that the scale mosses and liverworts, growing nearer to the stream, came last, and, with the damp earth about them, lay a-top of everything, flowers, dolls' wine-glasses, and all. It was a noble collection, but heavy. Amabel's face flushed, and she was slightly overbalanced, but she staggered sturdily along the path, which was now level.

She had quite forgotten Nurse's warning, when she came suddenly upon a figure crouched in her path, and gazing at her with large black eyes. Her fat cheeks turned pale, and with a cry of "It's Bogy!" she let down the whole contents of her dress into one of Jan's leaf-pictures.

"Don't hurt me! Don't take me away! Please, please don't!" she cried, dancing wildly.

"I won't hurt you, miss. I be going to help you to pick 'em up," said Jan.

By the time he had returned her treasures to her

skirt, Amabel had regained confidence, especially as she saw no signs of the black bag, in which naughty children are supposed to be put.

"What are you doing, Bogy?" said she.

"I be making a picture, miss," said Jan, pointing it out.

"Go on making it, please," said Amabel; and she sat down and watched him.

"Do you like this wood, Bogy?" she asked softly, after a time.

"I do, miss," said Jan.

"Why don't you sleep in it, then? I wouldn't sleep in a cellar, if I were you."

"I don't sleep in a cellar, miss."

"Nurse *says* you do," said Amabel, nodding emphatically.

Jan was at a loss how to express the full inaccuracy of nurse's statement in polite language, so he was silent; rapidly adding tint to tint from his heap of leaves, whilst the birds sang overhead, and Amabel sat with her two bundles watching him.

"I thought you were an old man!" she said at length.

"Oh, no, miss," said Jan, laughing.

"You don't look very bad," Amabel continued.

"I don't think I be very bad," said Jan modestly.

Amabel's next questions came at short intervals, like dropping shots.

"Do you say your prayers, Bogy?"

"Yes, miss."

"Do you go to church, Bogy?"

"Yes, miss."

"Then where do you sit?"

"In the choir, miss; the end next to Squire Ammaby's big pew."

"*Do you*?" said Amabel.

She had been threatened with Bogy for misbehaviour in church, and it was startling to find that he sat so near. She changed the subject, under a hasty remembrance of having once made a face at the parson through a hole in the bombazine curtains.

"Why don't you paint with paints, Bogy?" said she.

"I haven't got none, miss," said Jan.

"I've got a paint-box," said Amabel. "And, if you like, I'll give it to you, Bogy."

The colour rushed to Jan's face.

"Oh, thank you, miss!" he cried.

"You must dip the paints in water, you know, and rub them on a plate; and don't let them lie in a puddle," said Amabel, who loved to dictate.

"Thank you, miss," said Jan.

"And don't put your brush in your mouth," said Amabel.

"Oh dear no, miss," said Jan.

It had never struck him that one could want to put a paint-brush in one's mouth.

At this point, Amabel's overwrought energies suddenly failed her, and she burst out crying.

"I don't know how I shall get over the wall," said she.

"Don't 'ee cry, miss. I'll help you," said Jan.

"I can't walk any more," sobbed Amabel, who was, indeed, tired out.

"I'll take 'ee on my back," said Jan. "Don't 'ee cry."

With a good deal of difficulty Amabel was hoisted up, and planted her big feet in Jan's hands. It was no light pilgrimage for poor Jan, as he climbed the winding path. Amabel was peevish with weariness; her bundles were sadly in the way, and at every step a cup-moss or *marchanita* dropped out, and Amabel insisted upon its being picked up. But they reached the wall at last, and Jan got her over, and made two or three expeditions after the missing mosses before the little lady was finally content.

"Good-bye, Bogy," she said at last, holding up her face to be kissed. "And thank you very much. I'm not afraid of you, Bogy."

As Jan kissed her he said, smiling:

"What is your name, love?"

And she said, "Amabel."

To her parents and guardians, Amabel made the following statement: "I've seen Bogy. I like him. He doesn't sleep in the cellar, so Nurse told a story. And he didn't take me away, so that's another story. He says his prayers, and he goes to church, so he can't be the Bad Man. He makes pictures with leaves. He carried me on his back, but not in a bag———"

At this point the outraged feelings of Lady Craikshaw exploded, and she rang the bell, and ordered Miss Amabel to be put to bed with a dose of rhubarb and magnesia (without sal-volatile), for telling stories.

"The eau-de-Cologne, mamma dear, please," said Lady Louisa, as the door closed on the struggling, screaming, and protesting Amabel. "Isn't it really

dreadful? But Esmeralda Ammaby says Henry used to tell shocking stories when he was a little boy."

CHAPTER XXIV

On Sunday morning Jan took his place in church with unusual feelings. He looked here, there, and everywhere for the little damsel of the wood, but she was not to be seen. Meanwhile she had not sent the paint-box, and he feared it would never come. He fancied she must be the Squire's little daughter, but he was not sure, and she certainly was not in the big pew, where the back of the Squire's red head and Lady Louisa's aquiline nose were alone visible. She was a dear little soul, he thought. He wondered why she called him B gy. Perhaps it was a way little ladies had of addressing their inferiors.

Jan did not happen to guess that, Amabel being very young, the morning services were too long for her. In the afternoon he had given her up, but she was there.

The old Rector had reached the third division of his sermon, and Lady Craikshaw was asleep, when Amabel, mounting the seat with her usual vigour, pushed her Sunday hood through the bombazine curtains, and said, "Bogy!"

Jan looked up, and then started to his feet as Amabel stuffed the paint-box into his hands.

"I pushed it under my frock," she said in a stage whisper. "It made me so tight! But grandmamma is such———"

Jan heard and saw no more. Amabel's footing was apt to be insecure; she slipped upon the cushions and disappeared with a crash.

Jan trembled as he clasped the shallow old cedar-wood box. He wondered if the colours would prove as bright as those in the window. He fancied the wan, ascetic faces there rejoiced with him. When he got home, he sat under the shadow of the mill, and drew back the sliding-lid of the box. Brushes, and twelve hard colour cakes. They were Ackermann's, and very good. Cheap paint-boxes were not made then. He read the names on the back of them: Neutral Tint, Prussian Blue, Indian Red, Yellow Ochre, Brown Madder, Brown Pink, Burnt Umber, Vandyke Brown, Indigo, King's Yellow, Rose Madder, and Ivory Black.

It says much for Jan's uprightness of spirit, and for the sense of duty in which the schoolmaster was training him, that he did not neglect school for his new treasure. Happily for him the sun rose early, and Jan rose with it, and taking his paint-box to the little wood, on scraps of parcel paper and cap paper, on bits of wood and smooth white stones, he blotted in studies of colour, which he finished from memory at odd moments in the windmill.

In the summer holidays Jan had more time for sketching. But the many occasions on which he could not take his paints with him, led him to observe closely, and taught him to paint from memory with wonderful exactness. He was also obliged to reduce his outlines and condense his effects to a very small scale, to economise paper.

About this time he heard that Master Chuter was

going to have a new sign painted for the inn. Master Linseed was to paint it.

Master Linseed's shop had been a place of resort for Jan in some of his leisure time. At first the painter and decorator had been churlish enough to him, but finding that Jan was skilful with a brush, he employed him again and again to do his work, for which he received instead of giving thanks. Jan went there less after he got a paint-box, and could produce effects with good materials of his own, instead of making imperfect experiments in colours on bits of wood in the painter's shop.

But in this matter of the new sign-board he took the deepest interest. He had a design of his own for it which he was most anxious the painter should adopt.

"Look 'ee, Master Linseed," said he; "it be the 'Heart of Oak.' Now, I know a oak-tree with a big trunk and two arms. They stretches out one on each side, and the little branches closes in above till 'tis just like a heart. 'Twould be beautiful, Master Linseed, and I could bring 'ee leaves of the oak so that 'ee could match the yellows and greens. And then there'd be trees beyond and beyond, smaller and smaller, and all like a blue mist between them, thee know. That blue in the paper 'ee've got would just do, and with more white to it 'twould be beautiful for the sky. And——"

"And who's to do all that for a few shillings?" broke in the painter testily. "And Master Chuter wants it done and hung up for the Foresters' dinner."

Since the pressing nature of the commission was Master Linseed's excuse for not adopting his idea for the sign, it seemed strange to Jan that he did not set

about it in some fashion. But he delayed, and delayed, till Master Chuter was goaded to repeat the old rumour that real sign-painting was beyond his powers.

It was within a week of the dinner that the little innkeeper burst indignantly into the painter's shop. Master Linseed was ill in bed, and the signboard lay untouched in a corner.

"It be a kind of fever that's on him," said his wife.

"It be a kind of fiddlestick!" said the enraged Master Chuter; and turning round, his eye fell on Jan, who was looking as disconsolate as himself.

Day after day had he come in hopes of seeing Master Linseed at work, and now it seemed indefinitely postponed. But the innkeeper's face brightened, and, seizing Jan by the shoulder, he dragged him from the shop.

"Look 'ee here, Jan Lake," said he. "Do 'ee thenk *thee* could paint the sign? I dunno what I'd give 'ee if 'ee could, if 'twere only to spite that humbugging old hudmedud yonder."

Jan felt as if his brain were on fire.

"If 'ee'll get me the things, Master Chuter," he gasped, "and'll let me paint it in your place, I'll do it for 'ee for nothin'."

The innkeeper was not insensible to this consideration, but his chief wish was to spite Master Linseed. He lost no time in making ready, and for the rest of the week Jan lived between the tallet (or hayloft) of the inn and the wood where he had first studied trees. Master Chuter provided him with sheets of thick whity-brown paper, on which he made water-colour studies, from which he painted afterwards. By his desire no one was admitted to the tallet, though Master Chuter's delight

increased with the progress of the picture till the secret was agony to him. Towards the end of the week they were disturbed by a scuffling on the tallet stairs, and the dog Rufus bounced in, followed at a slower pace by the schoolmaster, crying:

"Unearthed at last!"

"Come in, come in! That's right!" shouted Master Chuter. "Let Master Swift look, Jan. He be a scholar and 'll tell us all about un."

But Jan shrank into the shadow. The schoolmaster stood in the light of the open shutter, towards which the painting was sloped, and Rufus sat by him on his haunches, and blinked with all the gravity of a critic; and in the half-light between them and the stairs stood the fat little innkeeper, with his hands on his knees, crying:

"There, Master Swift! Did 'ee ever see anything to beat that? Artis or ammytoor!"

Jan's very blood seemed to stand still. As Master Swift put on his spectacles, each fault in the painting sprang to the front and mocked him. It was indeed a wretched daub!

But Jan had been studying the scene under every lovely light of heaven from dawn to dusk for a week of summer days; Master Swift carried no such severe test in his brain. As he raised his head the tears were in his eyes, and he held out his hand, saying:

"My lad, it's just the spirit of the woods. But d'ye not think a figure or so would enliven it?" he continued. "One of Robin Hood's foresters 'chasing the flying roe?'"

"*Foresters*! To be sure!" said Master Chuter. "What did I say? 'Have the schoolmaster in,' says

"It's Bogy!"

(p. 136)

I. 'He be a scholar, and knows what's what. Put 'em in, Jan, put 'em in! there's plenty of room."

What Jan had already suffered from the innkeeper's suggestions, only an artist can imagine, and his imagination will need no help!

"I'd be main glad to get a bit of red in there," said Jan, in a low voice to Master Swift; "but Robin Hood must be in green, sir, mustn't he?"

"There's Will Scarlet. Put Will in," said Master Swift, who, pleased to be appealed to, threw himself warmly into the matter. "He can have just drawn his bow at a deer out of sight;" and with a charming simplicity, the old schoolmaster flung his burly figure into an appropriate attitude.

"Stand so a minute!" cried Jan; and seizing a lump of charcoal, with which he made his outlines, he rapidly sketched Master Swift's figure on the floor of the tallet.

Thinned down to what he declared to have been his dimensions in youth, it was transferred to Jan's picture, and the touch of red was the culminating point of the innkeeper's satisfaction.

On the day of the dinner, the new sign swung aloft.

"It couldn't dry better anywhere," said Master Chuter.

Jan "found himself famous." The whole parish assembled to admire. The windmiller, in his amazement, could not even find a proverb for the occasion, whilst Abel hung about the door of the "Heart of Oak" as if he had been the most confirmed toper, saying to all incomers:

"Have 'ee seen the new sign, sir? 'Twas our Jan did un."

His fame would probably have spread more widely, but for an overwhelming interest which came to distract the neighbourhood, and which destroyed a neat little project of Master Chuter's for running up a few tables amongst his kidney-beans, as a kind of "tea garden" for folk from outlying villages, who, coming in on Sunday afternoons to service, should also want to see the work of the boy sign-painter.

It is a curious instance of the inaccuracy of popular impressions, that when Master Linseed died three days after the Foresters' dinner, it was universally believed that he had been killed by vexation at Jan's success. Nor was this tradition the less firmly fixed in the village annals, that the disease to which he had succumbed spread like flames in a gale. It produced a slight reaction of sentiment against Jan. And his achievement was absolutely forgotten in the shadow of the months that followed.

For it was that year long known in the history of the district as the year of the Black Fever.

Unfortunately the miller's assistant, George, a cunning but stupid man, suspected that Jan was a rich man's child, and he plotted with a hunch-back hawker (who had married the woman who brought Jan to the mill). As a result of this plot Jan was kidnapped, taken to London, and made to be a pavement artist in order to earn money for the cruel hunch-back. In despair Jan ran away, was taken by a kindly gentleman to a boys' refuge where an artist discovered him and his great talent for drawing and painting. Jan made enough money to go back to the mill and comfort the last days of his foster-father and of the dear old schoolmaster, the latter of whom is one of the most interesting characters in the book. In the end Jan is restored to his rich father, becomes a famous artist and marries Amabel, the Squire's daughter.

VII. WE AND THE WORLD

Jack and Jem were two sons of a small yeoman farmer of the old-fashioned type. Jack was a clever enterprising and adventurous lad, whilst his elder brother Jem, the apple of his father's eye, took after his father, and all his interests were centred in the countryside. The father said "It's bad enough to have Jack with his nose in a book, and his head in the clouds, on a fine June day, with the hay all out, and the glass falling: but if Jem had been a lad of whims and fancies, I think it would have broken my poor old heart."

These two lads, however, clung together whilst under the healthy influence of Mrs. Wood, the mistress of Walnut Tree Farm Academy. But when that school was closed they were sent to Crayshaw's school. Here they were so unfairly and cruelly treated that one day they ran home.

Their father had at first no sympathy with their sufferings. Finally he decided that Jem should be sent to a better school, but that Jack should go back to Crayshaw's at once. Even when Crayshaw's school was publicly exposed, Jack's father treated him very unfairly as compared with Jem, and in sheer despair Jack ran away to sea. The following extract relates his experiences on arriving at Liverpool docks:—

CHAPTER XV

Loading and unloading, coming and going, lifting and lowering, shouting and replying, swearing and retorting, creaking and jangling, shrieking and bumping, cursing and chaffing, the noise and restlessness of men and things were utterly bewildering. I had often heard of a Babel of sounds, but I had never before heard anything so like what one might fancy it must have been

when that great crowd of workmen broke up, and left building their tower, in a confounding of language and misunderstanding of speech. For the men who went to and fro in these docks, each his own way, jostling and yelling to each other, were men of all nations, and the confusion was of tongues as well as of work. At one minute I found myself standing next to a live Chinaman in a pigtail, who was staring as hard as I at some swarthy supple-bodied sailors with eager faces, and scant clothing wrapped tightly round them, chatting to each other in a language as strange to the Chinaman as to me, their large lustrous eyes returning our curiosity with interest, and contrasting strangely with the tea-caddy countenance of my elbow neighbour. Then a turbaned Turk went by, and then two grinning negroes, and there were lots of men who looked more like Englishmen, but who spoke with other tongues, and amongst those who loaded and unloaded in this busy place, which was once of no importance, Irish brogue seemed the commonest language of all.

One thing made me hopeful—there were plenty of boys no bigger than myself who were busy working, and therefore earning wages, and as I saw several lads who were dressed in suits the very counterpart of my own, I felt sure that my travelling companion had done me a good turn when he rigged me out in slops. An incident that occurred in the afternoon made me a little more doubtful about this.

I really had found much to counterbalance the anxieties of my position in the delightful novelty and variety of life around me, and not a little to raise my hopes; for I had watched keenly for several hours as

much as I could see from the wharf of what was going on in this ship and that, and I began to feel less confused. I perceived plainly that a great deal of everyday sort of work went on in ships as well as in houses, with the chief difference, in dock at any rate, of being done in public. In the most free and easy fashion, to the untiring entertainment of crowds of idlers besides myself, the men and boys on vessel after vessel lying alongside, washed out their shirts and socks, and hung them up to dry, cooked their food, cleaned out their pots and pans, tidied their holes and corners, swept and brushed, and fetched and carried, and did scores of things which I knew I could do perfectly, for want of something better to do.

"It's clear there's plenty of dirty work to go on with till one learns seamanship," I thought; and the thought was an honest satisfaction to me.

I had always swept Uncle Henry's office, and that had been light work after cleaning the schoolroom at Snuffy's. My hands were never likely to be more chapped at sea than they had been with dirt and snow and want of things to dry oneself with at school; and as to coal-carrying———

Talking of coals, on board the big ship, out of which great white bales, strapped with bars of iron, were being pulled up by machinery, and caught and flung about by the "unloaders," there was a man whose business seemed to be to look after the fires, and who seemed also to have taken a roll in the coal-hole for pleasure; and I saw him find a tin basin and a square of soap, and a decent rough towel to wash his face and hands, such as would have been reckoned luxurious in

a dormitory at Snuffy's. Altogether, when a heavy hand was laid suddenly on my shoulder, and a gruff voice said :

" Well, my young star-gazing greenhorn, and what do you want ? "

I replied with alacrity, as well as with more respect than the stranger's appearance was calculated to inspire, " Please, sir, I want to go to sea, and I should like to ship for America."

He was not a nice-looking man by any means—far too suggestive of Snuffy, when Snuffy was partly drunk. But after a pause, he said :

" All right. Where are your papers ? What was your ship, and why did ye run ? "

" I have not served in a ship yet, sir," said I, " but I'm sure———"

He did not allow me to go on. With a sudden fierce look that made him more horribly like Snuffy than before, he caught me by my sleeve and a bit of my arm, and shoved me back from the edge of the dock till we stood alone. " Then where did ye steal your slops ? " he hissed at me with oaths. " Look here, ye young gallows-bird, if ye don't stand me a liquor, I'll run ye in as a run-away apprentice. So cash up, and look sharp."

I was startled, but I was not quite such a fool as I looked, mind or body. I had once had a hardish struggle with Snuffy himself when he was savage, and I was strong and agile beyond my seeming. I dived deeply into my trousers-pocket, as if feeling for the price of a " liquor," and the man having involuntarily allowed me a little swing for this, I suddenly put up my shoulders, and ran at him as if my head were a battering-ram,

and his moleskin waistcoat the wall of a beleaguered city, and then wrenching myself from his grasp, and dodging the leg he had put out to trip me, I fled blindly down the quay.

No one can take orange-peel into account, however. I slipped on a large piece and came headlong, with the aggravation of hearing my enemy breathing hoarsely close above me. As regards him, I suppose it was lucky that my fall jerked the shilling and the penny out of my pocket, for as the shilling rolled away he went after it, and I saw him no more. What I did see when I sat up was the last of my penny (which had rolled in another direction), as it gave one final turn and fell into the dock.

I could have cried with vexation, and partly with fatigue, for it was getting late, and I was getting tired. I had fallen soft enough, as it happened, for I found myself on a heap of seeds, some kind of small bean, and the yielding mass made a pleasant resting-place. There was no one very near, and I moved round to the back of the heap to be still more out of sight, and sat down to try and think what it was best to do. If my slops were really a sort of uniform to which I was not entitled, they would do me more harm than good. But whom could I ask? If there were an honest, friendly soul in all this crowd, and I could come across him, I felt that (without telling too much of my affairs) I could explain that I had exchanged some good shore clothes of my own for what I had been told were more suitable to the work I was looking out for, and say further that though I had never yet been at sea, I was hardy, and willing to make myself useful in any way. But how

could I tell whom to trust? I might speak fair to some likely-looking man, and he might take me somewhere and strip me of my slops, and find my leather money-bag, and steal that too. When I thought how easily my fellow-traveller might have treated me thus, I felt a thrill of gratitude towards him, and then I wondered how he had prospered in his search for work. As for me, it was pretty clear that if I hoped to work my way in this wicked world, I must suspect a scoundrel in every man I met, and forestall mischief by suspicion. As I sat and thought, I sifted the beans through my fingers, and saw that there were lots of strange seeds mixed with them, some of very fantastic shapes; and I wondered what countries they came from, and with what shape and scent and colour the plants blossomed, and thought how Charlie would like some of them to sow in pots and watch. As I drove my hands deeper into the heap, I felt that it was quite warm inside, and then I put my head down to smell if there was any fragrance in the seeds, and I did not lift it up again, for I fell fast asleep.

I was wakened by a touch on my head, and a voice just above me, saying: "He's alive annyhow, thank God!" and sitting up among the beans I found that it was dark and foggy, but a lamp at some distance gave me a pretty good view of an old woman who was bending over me.

She was dressed, apparently, in several skirts of unequal lengths, each one dingier and more useless-looking than the one beneath it. She had a man's coat, with a short pipe in the breast-pocket; and what her bonnet was like one could not tell, for it was comfort-

ably tied down by a crimson handkerchief with big white spots, which covered it completely. Her face was as crumpled and as dirty as her clothes, but she had as fine eyes and as kind eyes as mine have ever met. And every idea of needful wariness and of the wickedness of the world went quite naturally out of my head, and I said, "Did you think I was dead, mother?"

"I did not; though how would I know what would be the matter wid ye, lying there those three hours on your face, and not a stir out o' ye?"

"You're very kind," I said, dusting the bean-dust off my trousers, and I suppose I looked a little puzzled, for the old woman (helping me by flicking at my sleeve) went on: "I'll not deceive ye, my dear. It was my own Micky that was on my mind: though now you've lifted your face, barring the colour of his hair, there's no likeness betwixt ye, and I'm the disappointed woman again, GOD help me!"

"Is Micky your son?" I asked.

"He is, and a better child woman never had, till he tired of everything I would do for him, being always the boy for change, and went for a stow-a-way from this very port."

"Sit down, mother; stow-a-ways are lads that hide on board ship, and get taken to sea for nothing, aren't they?"

"They are, darlin'; but it's not for nothing they get kept at sea, ye may take your oath. And many's the one that leaves this in the highest of expictations, and is glad enough to get back to it in a tattered shirt and a whole skin, and with an increase of contintment under

the ways of home upon his mind."

"And you hope Micky 'll come back, I suppose?"

"Why wouldn't I, acushla? Sure it was by reason o' that I got bothered with the washin' after me poor boy left me, from my mind being continually in the docks, instead of with the clothes. And there I would be at the end of the week, with the captain's jerseys gone to old Miss Harding, and *his* washing no corricter than *hers*, though he'd more good nature in him over the accidents, and iron-moulds on the table-cloths, and pocket-hankerchers missin', and me ruined entirely with making them good, and no thanks for it, till a good-natured sowl of a foreigner that kept a pie-shop larned me to make the coffee, and lint me the money to buy a barra, and he says: 'Go as convanient to the ships as ye can, mother; it'll aise your mind. My own heart,' says he, laying his hand to it, 'knows what it is to have my body here, and the whole sowl of me far away.'"

"Did you pay him back?" I asked. I spoke without thinking, and still less did I mean to be rude; but it had suddenly struck me that I was young and hearty, and that it would be almost a duty to share the contents of my leather bag with this poor old woman, if there were no chance of her being able to repay the generous foreigner.

"Did I pay him back?" she screamed. "Would I be the black-hearted thief to him that was kind to me? Sorra bit nor sup but dry bread and water passed me lips till he had his own agin, and the heart's blessings of owld Biddy Macartney along with it."

I made my peace with old Biddy as well as I could,

and turned the conversation back to her son.

"So you live in the docks with your coffee-barrow, mother, that you may be sure not to miss Micky when he comes ashore?"

"I do, darlin'. Fourteen years all but three days. He'll be gone fifteen if we all live till Wednesday week."

"*Fifteen*? But, mother, if he were like me when he went, he can't be very like me now. He must be a middle-aged man. Do you think you'd know him?"

This question was more unfortunate than the other, and produced such howling and weeping, and beating of Biddy's knees as she rocked herself among the beans, that I should have thought every soul in the docks would have crowded round us. But no one took any notice of us, and by degrees I calmed her, chiefly by the assertion—"He'll know you mother, anyhow."

"He will so, GOD bless him!" said she. "And haven't I gone over it all in me own mind, often and often, when I'd see the vessels feelin' their way home through the darkness, and the coffee staymin' enough to cheer your heart wid the smell of it, and the laste taste in life of something betther in the stone bottle under me petticoats. And then the big ship would be coming in with her lights at the head of her, and myself sitting alone with me patience, GOD helping me, and one and another strange face going by. And then he comes along, cold maybe, and smells the coffee. 'Bedad, but that's a fine smell with it,' says he, for Micky was mighty particular in his aitin' and drinkin'. 'I'll take a dhrop of that,' says he, not noticing me particular, and if ever I'd the saycret of a good cup he gets it, me consayling me face. 'What will it be?' says he, setting down

the mug. 'What would it be, Micky, from your mother?' says I, and I lifts me head. Arrah, but then there's the heart's delight between us. 'Mother!' says he. 'Micky!' says I. And he lifts his foot and kicks over the barra, and dances me round in his arms. 'Ochone!' says the spictators; 'there's the fine coffee that's running into the dock.' 'Let it run,' says I, in the joy of me heart, 'and you after it, and the barra on the top of ye, now Micky me son's come home!'"

"Wonderfully jolly!" said I. "And it must be pleasant even to think of it."

But Biddy's effort of imagination seemed to have exhausted her, and she relapsed into the lowest possible spirits, from which she suddenly roused herself to return to her neglected coffee-stall.

"Bad manners to me, for an old fool! sitting here whineging and lamenting, when there's folks, maybe, waiting for their coffee, and yourself would have been the betther of some this half-hour. Come along wid ye."

And giving a tighter knot to the red kerchief, which had been disordered by her lamentations, the old woman went down the dock, I following her.

We had not to go far. Biddy's coffee barrow was placed just as the pieman had advised. It was as near the ships as possible. In fact it was actually under the shadow of a big black-looking vessel which loomed large through the fog, and to and from which men were coming and going as usual. With several of these the old woman interchanged some good-humoured chaff as she settled herself in her place, and bade me sit beside her.

"Tuck your legs under ye, agra! on that bit of an

ould sack. 'Tis what I wrap round me shoulders when the nights do be wet, as it isn't this evening, thank GOD! And there's the coffee for ye."

"Mother," said I, "do you think you could sit so as to hide me for a few minutes? All the money I have is in a bag round my neck, and I don't want strangers to see it."

"Ye'll just keep it there, then," replied Biddy, irately, "and don't go an' insult me wid the show of it."

And she turned her back on me, whilst I drank my coffee, and ate some excellent cakes, which formed part of her stock-in-trade. One of these she insisted on my putting into my pocket "against the hungry hour." I thanked her warmly for the gift, whereupon she became mollified, and said I was kindly welcome; and whilst she was serving some customers, I turned round and looked at the ship. Late as it was, people seemed very busy about her, rather more so than about any I had seen. As I sat, I was just opposite to a yawning hole in the ship's side, into which men were noisily running great bales and boxes, which other men on board were lowering into the depths of the vessel with very noisy machinery and with much shouting in a sort of uncouth rhythm, to which the grating and bumping of the crane and its chains was a trifle. I was so absorbed by looking, and it was so impossible to hear anything else unless one were attending, that I never discovered that Biddy and I were alone again, till the touch of her hand on my head made me jump.

"I beg your pardon, mother," I said; "I couldn't think what it was."

"I ax yours, dear. It's just the curls, and I'm the

foolish woman to look at 'em. Barrin' the hair, ye don't favour each other the laste."

I had really heard a good deal about Micky, and was getting tired of him, and inclined to revert to my own affairs.

"Mother, do you know where this ship comes from?"

"I do not. But she sails with the morning for Halifax, I'm told. And that's America way, and I insensed the cook—that was him that axed me where I bought my coffee—to have an eye out for Micky, in case he might come across him anywhere."

America way! To-morrow morning! A storm of thoughts rushed through my head, and in my passionate longing for help I knelt up by the old Irishwoman and laid my hand upon hers.

"Mother dear, do help me! You are so kind, and you've a boy of your own at sea. I want to go to America, and I've no papers or anything. Couldn't I stow away as Micky did? Couldn't I stow away on this one? I can work well enough when they find me out, if I could only hide so as to get off; and you know the ships and the docks so well, you could tell me how, if only you would."

I am always ashamed to remember the feeble way in which I finished off by breaking down, though I do not know that I could have used any argument that would have gone so far with Biddy. If it had been a man who had been befriending me, I'm sure I shouldn't have played the fool, but it was a woman, so I felt doubly helpless in having to depend on her, and she felt doubly kind, and in short, I put my face in my hands and sobbed.

For quite four hours after this I was puzzled to death

by smelling stale bad tobacco about myself; then I discovered that by some extraordinary jerk in the vehemence of the embrace which was Biddy's first response to my appeal, the little black pipe had got out of her coat-pocket and tumbled down the breast of my slops.

I hope my breakdown was partly due to the infectious nature of emotion, of which Biddy was so lavish that my prospects were discussed in a sadly unbusinesslike fashion. My conscience is really quite clear of having led her to hope that I would look out for Micky on the other side of the Atlantic, but I fear that she had made up her mind that we should meet, and that this went far towards converting her to my views for stowing away on the vessel lying alongside of us. However, that important point once reached, the old woman threw herself into the enterprise with a practical knowledge of the realities of the undertaking and a zest for the romance of it which were alike invaluable to me.

"The botheration of it is," said Biddy, after some talk, tangling her bonnet and handkerchief over her face till I felt inclined to beg her to let me put her straight—"the botheration of it is, that it's near to closing-time, and when the bell rings ivery soul'll be cleared out, labourers and idlers, and myself among 'em. Ye'll have to hide, me darlin', but there'll be no mighty difficulty in that, for I see a fine bit of tarpaulin yonder that'd consale a dozen of the likes of you. But there's that fool of a watchman that'll come parading and meandering up and down wid all the airs of a sentry on him and none of the good looks, and wid a sneaking bull's-eye of a lantern in his hand. He's at the end

of the wharf now, purshuin' to him! Maybe I'll get him to taste a dhrop of me coffee before the bell rings. Many's the cup I gave to the old watchman before him, peace to his sowl, the kindly craythur! that never did a more ill-natured thing on his beat than sleep like a child. Hide now, darlin', and keep the tail of your eye at a corner where ye'll see the ship. Maybe he'll take a nap yet, for all his airs, and then there's the chance for ye! And mind now, keep snug till the pilot's gone as I warned ye, and then it's the bold heart and the civil tongue, and just the good-nature of your ways, that'll be your best friends. The cook tells me the captain's as dacent a man as iver he served with, so you might aisy do worse, and are not likely to do better. Are ye hid now? Whisht! Whisht!"

I heard most of this through a lifted corner of the tarpaulin, under which I had the good luck to secrete myself without observation and without difficulty. In the same manner I became witness to the admirable air of indifference with which Biddy was mixing herself a cup of coffee as the watchman approached. I say *mixing* advisedly, for as he came up she was conspicuously pouring some of the contents of the stone bottle into her cup. Whether this drew the watchman's attention in an unusual degree, of course I do not know, but he stopped to say, "Good evening, Biddy."

"Good evening to ye, me dear, and a nasty damp evening it is."

"You're taking something to keep the damp out, I see, missus."

"I am, dear; but it's not for a foine milithrary-looking man like yourself to be having the laugh at a

poor old craythur with nothin' but the wind and weather in her bones."

"The wind and weather get into my bones, I can tell you," said the watchman; "and I begin my work in the fog just when you're getting out of it."

"And that's thrue, worse luck. Take a dhrop of coffee, allanna, before I lave ye."

"No, thank ye, missus; I've just had my supper."

"And would that privint ye from takin' the cup I'd be offering ye, wid a taste of somethin' in it against the damps, barrin' the bottle was empty?"

"Well, I'm not particular—as you are so pressing. Thank ye, mum; here's your good health."

I heard the watchman say this, though at the moment I dared not peep, and then I heard him cough.

"My sakes, Biddy, you make your—coffee—strong."

"Strong, darlin'? It's pure, ye mane. It's the rale craythur, that, and bedad! there's a dhrop or two left that's not worth the removing, and we'll share it annyhow. Here's to them that's far—r away."

"Thank you, thank you, woman."

"Thim that's *near*, and thim that's far away!" said Biddy, improving upon her toast.

There was a pause. I could hear the old woman packing up her traps, and then the man (upon whom the coffee and whisky seemed to produce a roughening rather than a soothing effect) said coarsely, "You're a rum lot, you Irish!"

"We are, dear," replied Biddy blandly; "and that's why we'd be comin' all the way to Lancashire for the improvement of our manners." And she threw the

sacking round her neck, and lifted the handles of her barrow.

"Good-night, me darlin'!" said she, raising her voice as she moved off. "*We'll meet again,* GOD willing."

"Safe enough, unless you tumble into the dock," replied the watchman. "Go steady, missus. I hope you'll get safe home with that barra o' yours."

"GOD send all safe home that's far from it!" shouted Biddy, in tones that rose above the rumbling of the wheel and the shuffling of her shoes.

"Haw! haw!" laughed the watchman, and with increased brutalness in his voice he reiterated, "You're a rum lot, Biddy! and free of most things, blessings and all."

I was not surprised that the sound of the wheel and the shoes ceased suddenly. Biddy had set down her barrow to retort. But it was with deep gratitude that I found her postpone her own wrath to my safety, and content herself with making her enemy "a prisint of the contimpt of a rogue."

"And what would I be doing but blessing ye?" she cried, in a voice of such dramatic variety as only quick wits and warm feelings can give, it was so full at once of suppressed rage, humorous triumph, contemptuous irony, and infinite tenderness. And I need hardly say that it was raised to a ringing pitch that would have reached my ears had they been buried under twenty tarpaulins. "GOD bless ye for ivermore! Good luck to ye! fine weather to ye! health and strength to ye! May the knaves that would harm ye be made fools for your benefit, and may niver worse luck light on one

hair of your head than the best blessings of Biddy Macartney!."

Something peculiar in the sound of Biddy's retreating movements made me risk another glance from an angle of the tarpaulin.

And upon my honour it is strictly true that I saw the old Irish woman drive her barrow down the dock till she passed out of sight, and that she went neither walking nor running, but *dancing*; and a good high stepping dance too, that showed her stockings, and shook the handkerchief on her head. And when she reached the end of the wharf she snapped her fingers in the air.

Then I drew my head back, and I could hear the watchman guffaw as if he would have split his sides. And even after he began to tramp up and down I could hear him still chuckling as he paced by.

And if I did not hear Biddy chuckle, it was perhaps because the joke on her side lay deeper down.

CHAPTER XVI

"The mariners shout,
The ships swing about,
The yards are all hoisted,
The sails flutter out."

The Saga of King Olaf.

THE docks were very quiet now. Only a few footfalls broke the silence, and the water sobbed a little round the piles, and there was some creaking and groaning and grinding, and the vessels drifted at their moorings, and bumped against the wharves.

The watchman paced up and down, and up and down. I did not hear him very clearly from under the tarpaulin,

and sometimes when he went farther away I did not hear him at all. At last I was so long without hearing him that I peeped cautiously out. What Biddy had said might be, seemed really to have happened. The watchman was sitting in a sort of armchair of iron-bound cotton-bales; his long coat was tucked between his legs, his hat was over his nose, and he was fast asleep.

I did not need any one to tell me that now was my time; but it was with limbs that almost refused their office from sheer fright, that I crept past the sleeping man, and reached the edge of the wharf. There was the vessel moving very slightly, and groaning dismally as she moved, and there was the hole, and it was temptingly dark. But—the gangway that had been laid across to it from the wharf was gone! I could have jumped the chasm easily with a run, but I dared not take a run. If I did it at all it must be done standing. I tried to fetch a breath free from heart-throbs, but in vain; so I set my teeth, and pulled nerves and sinews together and jumped.

It was too much for me, and I jumped short and fell. Then my training under the half-caste told in my favour. I caught the edge of the hole with my hands, and swung suspended over the water, with quite presence of mind enough to hear and think of what was going on about me. What I heard was the watchman, who roused up to call out, "Who's there?" and then he shot a sharp ray of light from his lantern right into the hole. It was very lucky for me that I was so low, for the light went over my head, and he saw nothing of me, my dark clothes making no mark against the ship's black hull.

My head was cool enough now, and my heart steady, and I listened with an intensity that postponed fear, though my predicament was not a pleasant one, and the rippling water below me was confusing.

The suspense was no doubt shorter than it seemed, before the light disappeared, and with a thankful heart I distinctly heard the watchman flop down again among the cotton-bales. Then I drew myself up over the edge and crept noiselessly into the ship. I took care to creep beyond range of the lantern, and then the swaying of the vessel made me feel so giddy that I had to lie still for a while where I was, before I could recover myself enough to feel about for a suitable hiding-place.

As I afterwards learnt, I was on the lower deck, which was being used for cargo instead of passengers. The said cargo seemed so tightly packed, that in spite of creeping, and groping, and knocking myself pretty hard, I could feel no nook or corner to my mind. Then I turned giddy again and reeled against the door of a cabin, which gave way so far as to let me fall inwards on to a heap of old sails, ropes, and other softish ship lumber stowed away within. As I fell my hand struck something warm, which I fancied gave a writhe out of my grasp. I groped and seized it again, and now there was no mistake. It was somebody's arm, who said in a quick undertone, "Gently, gently, sirs; I'm coming along with ye. I'll gie ye my word I'm after no harm."

I was taken aback, but thought it well to keep up my position, which appeared to be one of advantage. The young man (for it was a youngster's voice) was evidently no ship's officer. If he were a dockyard-pilferer, it was a nuisance, and a complication in my

affairs, but I might pull through the difficulty with presence of mind.

"Speak low!" I whispered sharply. "What's your name, and where do you come from?"

"Alister Auchterlay, they call me" (the whisper was a reluctant one, but I jogged his arm rather fiercely to shake the truth out of him). "I come from Aberdeenshire. But, man! if ye're for having me up in court, for GOD'S sake let me plead in another name, for my mother taks the papers."

"What are you doing here?" I whispered in a not very steady whisper, as I think my prisoner detected.

"I'm just stowing away," he said eagerly; "I'm no harming a thing. Eh, sir, if you're a ship's 'prentice, or whatever may be your duties on this vessel, let me bide! There's scores of stowaways taken every day, and I'll work as few could."

"Do, *do* try and speak low," I whispered; "or we shall both be found out. *I'm stowing away myself!*"

"Whew, laddie! How long will ye have been in Liverpool?"

"Only to-day. How long have you been there?"

"A week, and a sore week too."

"You've no friends here, have you?"

"Freens, did ye say? I've no freens nearer than Scotland."

"You must have had a hard time of it," I whispered.

"Ye may say so. I've slept four nights in the docks, and never managed to stow till to-night. There's a watchman about."

"I know," said I.

"I shouldn't have got in to-night, but the miscon-

ducted body's asleep, though I'll say it's the first time I saw him sleeping these four days. Eh, sirs! there's an awful indifference to responsibility, when a man does a thing like yon. But it'll be whisky, I'm thinking; for I heard him at clishmaclavers with one of these randy, drucken old Eirishers."

My blood boiled. "She was *not* drunk!" said I. "And she's—she's a great friend of mine."

"Whisht! whisht, man! We'll be heard. I ask your pardon, I'm sure."

I made no reply. The Scotchman's tone was unpleasantly dry. Besides it is very difficult to give vent to one's just indignation in whispers, and I still felt giddy, though I was resting my back against some of the lumber, rather comfortably.

"You'll no be Eirish, yourself?" the Scotchman asked in his own accent, which was as strong in its way as Biddy's.

"I'm English," I said.

"Just so. And edyucated, I dare to say?"

"I suppose so."

"Ye've not forgiven me that I wronged the old lady? Indeed, but I ask your pardon, and hers no less. It's not for the best of us to sit in judgment on the erring, as my mother has often said to me, unless it comes in the plain path of duty. But maybe your own temper would be a bit soored if your head were as light and your heart as sick as mine with starvation and hope deferred———"

"Are you hungry?" I interrupted.

"I'll not be sorry when we get a meal."

"What have you had to-day?" I asked.

"I've been in the dock all day," he answered evasively, "but I'm no great eater at the best of times, and I chewed two bits of orange-peel, not to speak of a handful of corn where there was a big heap had been spilt by some wasteful body or another, that had small thoughts of it's coming to use. Now hoo in this world's a man to make honest profit on a commodity he entrusts———"

"Sh! sh! You're raising your voice again," said I. "Where's your hand? It's only a cake, but it'll be better than nothing." And I held out the cake Biddy had made me put in my pocket.

"I'll no take it from ye. Keep it for your own needs; I'm harder than yourself, it's likely," he said, pushing my hand aside, and added almost peevishly, "but keep the smell of it from me."

"I can spare it perfectly," I whispered. "I've had plenty to eat quite lately."

I shall never forget how he clutched it then. I could hear his teeth clash with the eagerness of his eating. It almost frightened me in the darkness.

"Eh! man, that was good!" he gasped. "Are ye sure indeed and in truth ye could spare it all? I didn't think they made such bannocks out of Scotland. But we've much to learn in all matters, doubtless. Thank ye a thousand times."

"The old Irishwoman gave it me!" I said with some malice. "She made me put it in my pocket, though she had given me a good meal before, for which she would take nothing."

"It was leeberal of her," said Alister Auchterlay. "Verra leeberal; but there are good Christians to be met with, amongst all sorts, there's not a doot aboot it."

I should probably have pursued my defence of Biddy against this grudging—not to say insulting—tribute to her charity, if I had not begun to feel too tired to talk, and very much teased by the heaving of the vessel.

"I wish the ship would be quiet till we start," I said. "We're not at sea yet."

In reply to this Alister at some length, and with as much emphasis as whispering permitted, explained to me that a ship could not, in the nature of things, keep still, except in certain circumstances, such as being in dry dock for repairs or laying at anchor in absolutely still water.

"Good gracious!" I interrupted. "Of course I know all that. You don't suppose I expect it not to move."

"I understood ye to say that ye wushed it," he replied with dignity, if not offence.

"I don't know what I wish!" I moaned.

My companion's reply to this was to feel about for me and then to begin scrambling over me; then he said—"Move on, laddie, to your right, and ye'll find space to lie on the flat of your back, close by the ship's side. I'm feared you're barely fit for the job ye've undertaken, but ye'll be easier if ye lie down, and get some sleep."

I moved as he told me, and the relief of lying flat was great—so great that I began to pull myself together again, and made ready in my mind to thank my unseen companion for the generosity with which he had evidently given me the place he had picked for himself. But whilst I was thinking about it I fell fast asleep.

When I awoke, for the first minute I thought I was at home, and I could not conceive what Martha could be doing, that there should be, as far as one could hear, chimney-sweeping, cinder-riddling, furniture-moving, clock-winding, and spring-cleaning, of the most awful nature, all going on at once, and in a storm of yelling and scolding, which was no part of our domestic ways. But in another minute I knew where I was, and by the light coming through a little round porthole above me, I could see my companion.

He was still sleeping, so that I could satisfy my keen curiosity without rudeness. He had indeed given up the only bit of space to me, and was himself doubled up among lumber in a fashion that must have been very trying to the length of his limbs. For he was taller than I, though not, I thought, much older; two years or so, perhaps. The cut of his clothes (not their raggedness, though they were ragged as well as patched) confirmed me in my conviction that he was "not exactly a gentleman"; but I felt a little puzzled about him, for, broad as his accent was, he was even less exactly of the Tim Binder and Bob Furniss class.

He was not good-looking, and yet I hardly know any word that would so fittingly describe his face in the repose of sleep, and with that bit of light concentrated upon it, as the word "noble." It was drawn and pinched with pain and the endurance of pain, and I never saw anything so thin, except his hands, which lay close to his sides—both clenched. But I do think he would have been handsome if his face had not been almost aggressively intelligent when awake, and if his eyebrows and eyelashes had had any colour. His hair

was fair but not bright, and it was straight without being smooth, and tossed into locks that had no grace or curl. And why he made me think of a Bible picture —Jacob lying at the foot of the ladder to heaven, or something of that sort—I could not tell, and did not puzzle myself to wonder, for the ship was moving, and there was a great deal to be seen out of the window, tiny as it was.

It looked on to the dock, where men were running about in the old bewildering fashion. To-day it was not so bewildering to me, because I could see that the men were working with some purpose that affected our vessel, though the directions in which they ran, dragging ropes as thick as my leg, to the grinding of equally monstrous chains, were as mysterious as the figures of some dance one does not know. As to the noises they made, men and boys anywhere are given to help on their work with sounds of some sort, but I could not have believed in anything approaching to these, out of a lunatic asylum, unless I had heard them.

I could hear quite well, I could hear what was said, and a great deal of it, I am sorry to say, would have been better unsaid. But the orders which rang out interested me, for I tried to fit them on to what followed, though without much result. At last the dock seemed to be moving away from me—I saw men, but not the same men—and every man's eye was fixed on us. Then the thick brown rope just below my window quivered like a bow-string, and tightened (all the water starting from it in a sparkling shower) till it looked as firm as a bar of iron, and I held on tight, for we were swinging round. Suddenly the voice of command sang out—

(I fancied with a touch of triumph in the tone)—" Let go the warp ! " The thick rope sprang into the air, and wriggled like a long snake, and it was all I could do to help joining in the shouts that rang from the deck above and from the dock below. Then the very heart of the ship began to beat with a new sound, and the Scotch lad leaped like a deerhound to the window, and put his arm round my shoulder, and whispered, " That's the screw, man ! *we're off* ! "

When the ship was well out at sea they were discovered and taken before the captain. Fortunately for them he was human and kindly and as he happened to be in need of additional help they were allowed to work their way to America. On the way an upturned boat was sighted off the west coast of Ireland. Clinging to it almost exhausted was Dennis O'Moore, the son of an old Irish squire. Dennis became their great friend and throughout the rest of the book shared their adventures. In New York they find Michael Macartney, son of old Biddy : and Jack forthwith sets to work to redeem his promise and pay off a part of the debt he owes to her. The following is from Chapter XXIII :—

" Michael Macartney," muttered I, for that was the name over the door.

We went in as a customer came out, followed by Michael Macartney's parting words in a rich brogue that might have been old Biddy's own. I took a good look at him, which he returned with a civil comment on the heat, and an inquiry as to what I would take, which Dennis, in the thirstiness of his throat, answered for me, leaving me a few moments more of observation. I made a mental calculation, and decided that the man's

age would fit Mickey, and in the indescribableness of the colour of his clothes and his complexion he was undoubtedly like Biddy, but if they had been born in different worlds the expression of his eyes could not have been more different. I had the clearest remembrance of hers. One does not so often look into the eyes of a stranger and see genuine feeling that one should forget it. For the rest of him, I was glad that Biddy had allowed that there was no similarity "betwixt us." He had a low forehead, a broad nose, a very wide mouth, full of very large teeth, and the humorous twinkle in his eye did not atone for the complete absence of that steady light of honest tenderness which shone from Biddy's as freely and fearlessly as the sun shines. He served Dennis and Alister and turned to me.

"Have you a mother in Liverpool?" I asked, before he had time to ask me which "pop" I wanted.

As I have said, his mouth was big, but I was almost aghast at the size to which it opened, before he was able to say, "Murther and ages! Was ye there lately? Did ye know her?"

"Yes; I know her."

"And why would ye be standing out there with the cold pop, when there's something better within? Come in, me boy. So you're acquainted with my mother? And how was she?"

"No, thank you, I don't drink spirits. Yes; your mother was well when I saw her."

"God be praised! It's a mighty long time since I seen the old craythur."

"Fifteen years," said I.

I looked at Mr. Macartney as I said it, but he had

evasive eyes, and they wandered to the doorway. No customers appeared, however, and he looked back to Dennis and Alister, but they had both folded their arms, and were watching us in silence.

"Murther and ages!" he repeated, "it doesn't feel the half of it."

"I fancy it seems longer, if anything, to her. But she has been on the look-out for you every day, you see. You've a good business, Mr. Macartney, so I dare say you're a ready reckoner. Fifteen times three hundred and sixty-five? Five thousand four hundred and seventy-five, isn't it?"

"It's a fine scholar for a sailor-boy that ye are!" said Mickey; and there was a touch of mischief in his eye and voice which showed that he was losing his temper. I suppose Dennis heard it, too, for he took one bound to my side in a way that almost made me laugh to feel how ready he was for a row. But I knew that, after all, I had no right over the man's private affairs, warm as was my zeal for old Biddy.

"And you think I might mind my business and leave you to yours, Mr. Macartney?" I said. "But you see, your mother was very kind to me, very kind indeed; and when I left Liverpool I promised her if ever I came across you, you should hear of her, and she should hear of you."

"And why not?" he answered in mollified tones. "It's mighty good-natured in ye, too. But come in, all the three of ye, and have somethin' to eat and to drink for the sake of the old country."

We followed him into a back parlour, where there were several wooden rocking-chairs, and a strong smell

of stale tobacco. Here he busied himself in producing cold meat, a squash pie, and a bottle of whisky, and was as voluble as civil about every subject except the one I wished to talk of. But the memory of his mother was strong upon me, and I had no intention of letting it slide.

"I'm so glad to have found you," I said. "I am sure you can't have known what a trouble it has been to your mother never to have heard from you all these years."

"Arrah! And why should she bother herself over me?" he answered impatiently. "Sure I never was anything *but* a trouble to her, worse luck!" And before I could speak again, he went on, "But make your mind aisy, I'll be writing to her. Many's the time that I've all but indited the letter, but I'll do it now. Upon me conscience, ye may dipind upon me."

Could I depend upon his shambling conscience? Every instinct of an honest man about me answered, No. As he had done for fifteen years past, so he would do for fifteen years to come. As long as he was comfortable himself, his mother would never get a line out of him. Perhaps his voice recalled hers, but I almost fancied I could hear her as I sat there—"I ax your pardon, darlin'. It was my own Mickey that was on my mind."

"Look here, Mr. Macartney," said I; "I want you to do me a favour. I owe your mother a good turn, and it'll ease my mind to repay it. Sit down whilst we're enjoying your hospitality, and just write her a line, and let me have the pleasure of finding a stamp and putting it in the post with my own hands."

We argued the point for some time, but Mickey found the writing materials at last, and sat down to write. As he proceeded he seemed to become more reconciled to the task; though he was obviously no great scribe, and followed the sentiments he was expressing with curious contortions of his countenance which it was most funny to behold. By-and-by I was glad to see a tear or two drop on to the paper, though I was sorry that he wiped them up with his third finger, and wrote over the place before it had time to dry.

"Murther and ages! But it's mighty pleased that she'll be," said Mr. Macartney when he had finished. He looked mighty pleased with himself, and he held the letter out to me.

"Do you mean me to read it?" I asked.

"I did. And ye can let your friends hear too."

I read it aloud, wondering as I read. If pen and ink spoke the truth, Biddy's own Mickey's heart was broke entirely with the parting from his mother. Sorra a bit of taste had there been in his food, or a drop of natural rest had he enjoyed for the last fifteen years. "Five thousand four hundred and seventy-five days—no less." (When I reached this skilful adoption of my calculations, I involuntarily looked up. There sat Mr. Macartney in his rocking-chair. He was just lighting a short pipe, but he paused in the operation to acknowledge what he evidently believed to be my look of admiration, with a nod and a wink. I read on). Times were cruel bad out there for a poor boy that lived by his industry, but thank GOD he'd been spared the worst pangs of starvation (I glanced round the pop-shop, but as Mickey himself would have said, No matther!) and

didn't it lighten his heart that day to hear of his dear mother sitting content and comfortable at her own coffee stall. It was murderously hot in these parts, and New York—bad luck to it—was a mighty different place from the dear old Ballywhack where he was born. Would they ever see old Ireland again? (Here a big blot betrayed how much Mr. Macartney had been moved by his own eloquence). The rest of the letter was rich with phrases both of piety and affection. How much of the whole composition was conscious humbug, and whether any of it was genuine feeling, I have as little idea now as I had then. The shallows of the human heart are at least as difficult to sound as its depths, and Mickey Macartney's was quite beyond me. One thing about the letter was true enough. As he said, it would "plaze the ould craythur intirely."

By the time I had addressed it "Mrs. Biddy Macartney, coffee-seller," to the care of the Dock-gatekeeper, we had not much spare time left in which to stamp and post it, so we took leave of the owner of the pop-shop. He was now very unwilling to let us go. He did not ask another question about his mother, but he was consumed with trivial curiosity about us. Once again he alluded to Biddy. We were standing outside, and his eye fell upon the row of shining pop-taps—

"Wouldn't she be the proud woman now, av she could see me!" he cried.

"Why don't you get her out to live with you?" I asked.

He shook his head. "I'm a married man, Mr.—— bad luck to me, I've forgotten your name now?"

"I didn't trouble you with it Well I hope you'll go

and see her before she dies."

But when I come to think of it, I did not feel sure if that was what I wished. Not being a woman, how could I balance the choice of pain? How could I tell if it were better for her to be disappointed with every ship and every tide, still having faith in her own Mickey, and hope of his coming, or for the tide and the ship to bring him with all his meanness upon the head she loved, a huge disappointment, once for all!

After many trials and adventures they returned to Liverpool and tried to find Biddy. Chapter XXX.

We reached Liverpool about four o'clock in the afternoon, and as we drew up alongside of the old wharf, my first thought was to look for Biddy Macartney. Alister had to remain on board for a time, but Dennis came willingly with me in search of the old woman and her coffee-barrow. At last we betook ourselves to the Dock-gatekeeper, to make inquiries, and from him we heard a sad story. The old woman had "failed a deal of late," he said. He "*had* heard she wasn't right in her mind, but whether they'd shifted her to a 'sylum or not, he couldn't say." If she was at home, she was at an address which he gave us.

"Will you go, Dennis? I must. At once."

"Of course."

Biddy was at home, and never whilst I live can I forget the "home." Four blocks of high houses enclosed a small court into which there was one entrance, an archway through one of the buildings. All the houses opened into the court. There were no back-

doors, and no back premises whatever. All the dirt and (as to washing) all the cleanliness of a crowded community living in rooms in flats, the quarrelling and the love-making, the old people's resting, and the children's playing;—from emptying a slop-pail to getting a breath of evening air—this court was all there was for it. I have since been told that if we had been dressed like gentlemen, we should not have been safe in it, but I do not think we should have met with any worse welcome if we had come on the same errand—"to see old Biddy Macartney."

Roughly enough, it is true, we were directed to one of the houses, the almost intolerable stench of which increased as we went up the stairs. By the help of one inmate and another, we made our way to Biddy's door, and then we found it locked.

"The missis 'll be out," said a deformed girl who was pulling herself along by the balustrades. She was decent-looking and spoke civilly, so I ventured to ask, "Do you mean that old Biddy is out?"

"Nay, not Biddy. The woman that sees to her. When she's got to go out she locks t'old lass up to be safe," and volunteering no further help, the girl rested for a minute against the wall with her hand to her side, and then dragged herself into one of the rooms and shut the door in our faces.

The court without and the houses within already resounded so to the squalling of children, that I paid no attention to the fact that more of this particular noise was coming up the stairs; but in another moment a woman, shaking a screaming baby in her arms and dragging two crying children at her skirts, clenched her

disengaged fist (it had a key in it) close to our faces and said, " And which of you vagabonds is t'old lass's son ? "

" Neither of us," said I, " but we want to see her, if we may. Are you the woman who takes care of her ? "

" I've plenty to do minding my own, I can tell ye," she grumbled, " but I couldn't abear to see t'ould lass taken to a 'sylum. They're queer places some on 'em, as I know. And as to t' House ! There's a many folks says, ' Well if t' guardians won't give her no relief, let her go in.' But she got hold on me one day, and she says, ' Sally, darling' (that's t'ould lass's way, is calling ye Darling. It sounds soft, but she is but an old Irish woman, as one may say), ' if ever,' she says, ' you hear tell of their coming to fetch me, GOD bless ye,' she says, ' just give me a look out of your eye, and I'm gone. I'll be no more trouble to any one,' she says, ' and maybe I'll make it worth your while too.' "

At this point in her narrative the woman looked mysterious, nodded her head, craned over the banisters to see that no one was near, slapped the children and shook up the baby as a sort of mechanical protest against the noise they were making (as to effects they only howled the louder), and drawing nearer to us, spoke in lower tones :

" T'old lass has money, it's my belief, though she gives me nowt for her lodging, and she spends nowt on herself. She's many a time fair clemmed, I'll assure ye, till I can't abear to see it, and I give her the bit and sup I might have had myself, for I'm not going to rob t'children neither for her nor nobody. Ye see it's her son that's preying on her mind. He wrote her a letter awhile ago, saying times was bad out yonder, and he

"THERE'S THE COFFEE FOR YE."

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was fair heartbroke to be so far away from her, and she's been queer ever since. She's wanted for everything herself, slaving and saving to get enough to fetch him home. Where she hides it I know no more nor you, but she wears a sight of old rags, one atop of another, and pockets in all of 'em for aught I know—hold your din, ye unrewly children!—there's folks coming. I'll let ye in. I lock t'old lass up when I go out, for she might be wandering, and there's them hereabouts that would reckon nought of putting her out of t'way and taking what she's got, if they heard tell on't."

At last the door was unlocked and we went in. And sitting on a low box, dressed as before, even to the old coat and the spotted kerchief over her bonnet, sat Biddy Macartney.

When she lifted her face, I saw that it was much wasted, and that her fine eyes had got a restless uneasy look in them. Suddenly this ceased, and they lit up with the old intelligence. For half an instant I thought it was at the sight of me, but she did not even see me. It was on Dennis O'Moore that her eyes were bent, and they never moved as she struggled to her feet, and gazed anxiously at his face, his cap, and his seafaring clothes, whilst, for his part, Dennis gazed almost as wildly at her. At last she spoke:

"God save ye, Squire! Has the old counthry come to this? Is the O'Moore an alien, and all?"

"No, no. I'm the Squire's son," said Dennis. "But tell me quick, woman, what are you to Barney Barton?"

"Barney is it? Sure he was brother to me, as who knows better than your honour?"

"Did *you* live with us, too?"

"I did, acushla. In the height of ease and comfort, and done nothing for it. Wasn't I the big fool to be marryin' so early, not knowin' when I was well off!"

"I know. Barney has told me. A Cork man, your husband, wasn't he? A lazy, drunken, ill-natured rascal of a fellow."

"That's him, your honour!"

"Well, you're quit of him long since. And, as your son's in New York, and all I have left of Barney is you———"

"She doesn't hear you, Dennis."

I interrupted him, because in his impetuosity he had not noticed that the wandering look had come back over the old woman's face, and that she sat down on the box, and fumbled among her pockets for Mickey's letter, and then crouched weeping over it.

We stayed a long time with her, but she did not really revive. With infinite patience and tenderness, Dennis knelt beside her, and listened to her ramblings about Mickey, and Mickey's hardships, and Mickey's longing for home. Once or twice, I think, she was on the point of telling about her savings, but she glanced uneasily round the room and forbore. Dennis gave the other woman some money, and told her to give Biddy a good meal—to have given money to her would have been useless—and he tried hard to convince the old woman that Mickey was quite able to leave America if he wished. At last she seemed to take this in, and it gave her, I fear, undue comfort, from the conviction that, if this were so, he would soon be home.

After we left Biddy, we went to seek decent lodgings for the night. For Dennis was anxious to see her again

in the morning, and of course I stayed with him.

"Had you ever seen her before?" I asked, as we walked.

"Not to remember her. But Jack, it wasn't Barney I saw in that first dream.* It was Bridget."

Dennis was full of plans for getting her home with him to Ireland; but when we went back next day, we found a crowd round the archway that led into the court. Prominent in the group was the woman who "cared for" Biddy. Her baby was crying, her children were crying, and she was crying too. And with every moment that passed the crowd grew larger and larger, as few things but bad news can make a crowd grow.

We learnt it very quickly. Biddy had been so much cheered up by our visit, that when the woman went out to buy supper for them, she did not lock the door. When she came back, Biddy was gone. To do her neighbours justice, we could not doubt—considering how they talked then—that they had made inquiries in all the streets and courts around.

"And wherever t'owld lass *can* ha' gone!" sobbed the woman who had been her neighbour, in the noblest sense of neighbourhood.

I was beginning to comfort her when Dennis gripped me by the arm: "I know," said he. "Come along!"

His face was white, his eyes shone, and he tossed his head so wildly he looked madder than Biddy had looked; but when he began to run, and roughs in the streets began to pursue him, I ran too, as a matter of safety. We drew breath at the dock-gates.

* On the way home from America, Dennis had two strange dreams: one about his old servant, Barney, as he thought, but with Biddy's bonnet on, and the second about Barney, sitting on a wharf, gazing into the water.

The gatekeeper told us that old Biddy, "looking quite herself, only a bit thinner like," had gone through the evening before, to meet some one who was coming off one of the vessels, as he understood, but he had not noticed her on her return. He had heard her ask some man about a ship from New York.

I wanted to hear more, but Dennis clutched me again and dragged me on.

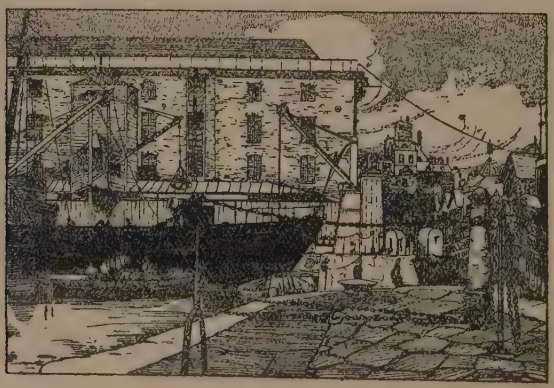
"I'll know the wharf when I see it," said he.

Suddenly he stopped, and pointed. A wharf, but no vessel, only the water sobbing against the stones.

"That's the wharf," he gasped. "That's where he sat and looked down. *She's there.*"

* * * *

He was right. We found her there at ebb of tide, with no sign of turmoil or trouble about her, except the grip that never could be loosened with which she held Mickey's one letter fast in her hand.



VIII. OLD-FASHIONED FAIRY TALES

THE COBBLER AND THE GHOSTS

Long ago there lived a cobbler who had very poor wits, but by strict industry he could earn enough to keep himself and his widowed mother in comfort.

In this manner he had lived for many years in peace and prosperity, when a distant relative died who left him a certain sum of money. This so elated the cobbler that he could think of nothing else, and his only talk was of the best way of spending the legacy.

His mother advised him to lay it by against a rainy day.

"For," said she, "we have lived long in much comfort as we are, and have need of nothing; but when you grow old, or if it should please Heaven that you become disabled, you will then be glad of your savings."

But to this the cobbler would not listen. "No," said he, "if we save the money it may be stolen, but if we spend it well, we shall have the use of what we buy, and may sell it again if we are so minded."

He then proposed one purchase after another, and each was more foolish than the rest. When this had gone on for some time, one morning he exclaimed: "I have it at last! We will buy the house. It cannot be stolen or lost, and when it is ours we shall have no rent to pay, and I shall not have to work so hard."

" He will never hit on a wiser plan than that," thought the widow ; " it is not to be expected " So she fully consented to this arrangement, which was duly carried out ; and the bargain left the cobbler with a few shillings, which he tied up in a bag and put in his pocket, having first changed them into pence, that they might make more noise when he jingled the bag as he walked down the street.

Presently he said : " It is not fit that a man who lives in his own house, and has ready money in his pocket too, should spend the whole day in labouring with his hands. Since by good luck I can read, it would be well that I should borrow a book from the professor, for study is an occupation suitable to my present position."

Accordingly, he went to the professor, whom he found seated in his library, and preferred his request.

" What book do you want ? " asked the professor.

The cobbler stood and scratched his head thoughtfully. The professor thought that he was trying to recall the name of the work ; but in reality he was saying to himself : " How much additional knowledge one requires if he has risen ever so little in life ! Now, if I did but know where it is proper to begin in a case full of books like this ! Should one take the first on the top shelf, or the bottom shelf, to the left, or to the right ? "

At last he resolved to choose the book nearest to him ; so drawing it out from the rest, he answered—

" This one, if it please you, learned sir." The professor lent it to him, and he took it home and began to read.

It was, as it happened, a book about ghosts and

apparitions; and the cobbler's mind was soon so full of these marvels that he could talk of nothing else, and hardly did a stroke of work for reading and pondering over what he read. He could find none of his neighbours who had seen a ghost, though most had heard of such things, and many believed in them.

"Live and learn," thought the cobbler; "here is fame as well as wealth. If I could but see a ghost there would be no more to desire." And with this intent he sallied forth late one night to the churchyard.

Meanwhile a thief (who had heard the jingle of his money-bag) resolved to profit by the cobbler's whim; so wrapping himself in a sheet, he laid wait for him in a field that he must cross to reach the church.

When the cobbler saw the white figure, he made sure that he had now seen a ghost, and already felt proud of his own acquaintance, as a remarkable character. Meanwhile, the thief stood quite still, and the cobbler walked boldly up to him, expecting that the phantom would either vanish or prove so impalpable that he could pass through it as through a mist, of which he had read many notable instances in the professor's book. He soon found out his mistake, however, for the supposed ghost grappled him, and without loss of time relieved him of his money-bag. The cobbler (who was not wanting in courage) fastened as tightly on to the sheet, which he still held with desperate firmness when the thief had slipped through his fingers; and after waiting in vain for further marvels, he carried the sheet home to his mother, and narrated his encounter with the ghost.

"Alack-a-day! that I should have a son with so

little wit!" cried the old woman; "it was no ghost, but a thief, who is now making merry with all the money we possessed."

"We have his sheet," replied her son; "and that is due solely to my determination. How could I have acted better?"

"You should have grasped the man, not the sheet," said the widow, "and pummelled him till he cried out and dropped the money-bag."

"Live and learn," said the cobbler. The next night he went out as before, and this time reached the churchyard unmolested. He was just climbing the stile, when he again saw what seemed to be a white figure standing near the church. As before, it proved solid, and this time he pummelled it till his fingers bled, and for very weariness he was obliged to go home and relate his exploits. The ghost had not cried out, however, nor even so much as moved, for it was neither more nor less than a tall tombstone shining white in the moonlight.

"Alack-a-day!" cried the old woman, "that I should have a son with so little wit as to beat a gravestone till his knuckles are sore! Now if he had covered it with something black that it might not alarm timid women or children, that would at least have been an act of charity."

"Live and learn," said the cobbler. The following night he again set forth, but this time in another direction. As he was crossing a field behind his house he saw some long pieces of linen which his mother had put out to bleach in the dew.

"More ghosts!" cried the shoemaker, "and they

"He hardly did a stroke of work."

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know who is behind them. They have fallen flat at the sound of my footsteps. But one must think of others as well as oneself, and it is not every heart that is as stout as mine." Saying which he returned to the house for something black to throw over the prostrate ghosts. Now the kitchen chimney had been swept that morning, and by the back door stood a sack of soot.

"What is blacker than soot?" said the cobbler; and taking the sack, he shook it out over the pieces of linen till not a thread of white was to be seen. After which he went home, and boasted of his good deeds.

The widow now saw that she must be more careful as to what she said; so, after weighing the matter for some time, she suggested to the cobbler that the next night he should watch for ghosts at home; "for they are to be seen," said she, "as well when one is in bed as in the fields."

"There you are right," said the cobbler, "for I have this day read of a ghost that appeared to a man in his own house. The candles burnt blue, and when he had called thrice upon the apparition, he became senseless."

"That was his mistake," said the old woman. "He should have turned a deaf ear, and even pretended to slumber; but it is not every one who has courage for this. If one could really fall asleep in the face of the apparition, there would be true bravery."

"Leave that to me," said the cobbler. And the widow went off chuckling to herself, "If he comes to any mischance by holding his tongue and going to sleep, ill-luck has got him by the leg, and counsel is wasted on him."

As soon as his mother was in bed, the cobbler prepared for his watch. First he got together all the candles in the house, and stuck them here and there about the kitchen, and sat down to watch till they should burn blue. After waiting some time, during which the candles only guttered with the draughts, the cobbler decided to go to rest for a while. "It is too early yet," he thought; "I shall see nothing till midnight."

Very soon, however, he fell asleep; but towards morning he awoke, and in the dim light perceived a figure in white at his bedside. It was a blacksmith who lived near, and he had run in in his night-shirt without so much as slippers on his feet.

"The ghost at last!" thought the cobbler, and, remembering his mother's advice, he turned over and shut his eyes.

"Neighbour! neighbour!" cried the blacksmith, "your house is on fire!"

"An old bird is not to be caught with chaff," chuckled the cobbler to himself; and he pulled the bed-clothes over his head.

"Neighbour!" roared the blacksmith, snatching at the quilt to drag it off, "are you mad? The house is burning over your head. Get up for your life!"

"I have the courage of a general, and more," thought the cobbler; and holding tightly on to the clothes he pretended to snore.

"If you will burn, burn!" cried the blacksmith angrily, "but I mean to save my bones"—with which he ran off.

And burnt the cobbler undoubtedly would have been, had not his mother's cries at last convinced him that

the candles had set fire to his house, which was wrapped in flames. With some difficulty he escaped with his life, but of all he possessed nothing remained to him but his tools and a few articles of furniture that the widow had saved.

As he was now again reduced to poverty, he was obliged to work as diligently as in former years, and passed the rest of his days in the same peace and prosperity which he had before enjoyed.

KNAVE AND FOOL

A Fool and a Knave once set up house together: which shows what a fool the Fool was.

The Knave was delighted with the agreement; and the Fool thought himself most fortunate to have met with a companion who would supply his lack of mother-wit.

As neither of them liked work, the Knave proposed that they should live upon their joint savings as long as these should last; and, to avoid disputes, that they should use the Fool's share till it came to an end, and then begin upon the Knave's stocking.

So, for a short time, they lived in great comfort at the Fool's expense, and were very good company; for easy times make easy tempers.

Just when the store was exhausted, the Knave came running to the Fool with an empty bag and a wry face, crying, "Dear friend, what shall we do? This bag, which I had safely buried under a gooseberry-bush, has been taken up by some thief, and all my money stolen.

My savings were twice as large as yours ; but now that they are gone, and I can no longer perform my share of the bargain, I fear our partnership must be dissolved."

" Not so, dear friend," said the Fool, who was very good-natured ; " we have shared good luck together, and now we will share poverty. But as nothing is left, I fear we must seek work."

" You speak very wisely," said the Knave. " And what, for instance, can you do ? "

" Very little," said the Fool ; " but that little I do well."

" So do I," said the Knave. " Now can you plough, or sow, or feed cattle, or plant crops ? "

" Farming is not my business," said the Fool.

" Nor mine," said the Knave ; " but no doubt you are a handicraftsman. Are you clever at carpentry, mason's work, tailoring, or shoemaking ?

" I do not doubt that I should have been had I learned the trades," said the Fool, " but I never was bound apprentice."

" It is the same with myself," said the Knave ; " but you may have finer talents. Can you paint, or play the fiddle ? "

" I never tried," said the Fool ; " so I don't know."

" Just my case," said the Knave. "And now, since we can't find work, I propose that we travel till work finds us."

The two comrades accordingly set forth, and they went on and on, till they came to the foot of a hill, where a merchantman was standing by his wagon, which had broken down.

" You seem two strong men," said he, as they ad-

vanced; "if you will carry this chest of valuables up to the top of the hill, and down to the bottom on the other side, where there is an inn, I will give you two gold pieces for your trouble."

The Knave and the Fool consented to this, saying, "Work has found us at last;" and they lifted the box on to their shoulders.

"Turn, and turn about," said the Knave; "but the best turn between friends is a good turn; so I will lead the way up-hill, which is the hardest kind of travelling, and you shall go first down-hill, the easy half of our journey."

The Fool thought this proposal a very generous one, and, not knowing that the lower end of their burden was the heavy one, he carried it all the way. When they got to the inn, the merchant gave each of them a gold piece, and, as the accommodation was good, they remained where they were till their money was spent. After this, they lived there awhile on credit; and when that was exhausted, they rose one morning whilst the landlord was still in bed, and pursued their journey, leaving old scores behind them.

They had been a long time without work or food, when they came upon a man who sat by the roadside breaking stones, with a quart of porridge and a spoon in a tin pot beside him.

"You look hungry, friends," said he, "and I, for my part, want to get away. If you will break up this heap, you shall have the porridge for supper. But when you have eaten it, put the pot and spoon under the hedge, that I may find them when I return."

"If we eat first, we shall have strength for our work,"

said the Knave; "and as there is only one spoon, we must eat by turns. But fairly divide, friendly abide. As you went first the latter part of our journey, I will begin on this occasion. When I stop, you fall to, and eat as many spoonfuls as I ate. Then I will follow you in like fashion, and so on till the pot is empty."

"Nothing could be fairer," said the Fool; and the Knave began to eat, and went on till he had eaten a third of the porridge. The Fool, who had counted every spoonful, now took his turn, and ate precisely as much as his comrade. The Knave then began again, and was exact to a mouthful; but it emptied the pot. Thus the Knave had twice as much as the Fool, who could not see where he had been cheated.

They then set to work.

"As there is only one hammer," said the Knave, "we must work, as we supped, by turns; and as I began last time, you shall begin this. After you have worked awhile, I will take the hammer from you, and do as much myself whilst you rest. Then you shall take it up again, and so on till the heap is finished."

"It is not every one who is as just as you," said the Fool; and taking up the hammer, he set to work with a will.

The Knave took care to let him go on till he had broken a third of the stones, and then he did as good a share himself; after which the Fool began again, and finished the heap.

By this means the Fool did twice as much work as the Knave, and yet he could not complain.

As they moved on again, the Fool perceived that the Knave was taking the can and the spoon with him.

"I am sorry to see you do that, friend," said he.

"It's a very small theft," said the Knave. "The can cannot have cost more than sixpence when new."

"That is not what I meant," said the Fool, "so much as that I fear the owner will find it out."

"He will only think the things have been stolen by some vagrant," said the Knave—"which, indeed, they would be if we left them. But as you seem to have a tender conscience, I will keep them myself."

After a while they met with a farmer, who offered to give them supper and a night's lodging, if they would scare the birds from a field of corn for him till sunset.

"I will go into the outlying fields," said the Knave, "and as I see the birds coming, I will turn them back. You, dear friend, remain in the corn, and scare away the few that may escape me."

But whilst the Fool clapped and shouted till he was tired, the Knave went to the other side of the hedge, and lay down for a nap.

As they sat together at supper, the Fool said, "Dear friend, this is laborious work. I propose that we ask the farmer to let us tend sheep instead. That is a very different affair. One lies on the hillside all day. The birds do not steal sheep; and all this shouting and clapping is saved."

The Knave very willingly agreed, and next morning the two friends drove a flock of sheep on to the downs. The sheep at once began to nibble, the dog sat with his tongue out, panting, and the Knave and Fool lay down on their backs, and covered their faces with their hats to shield them from the sun.

Thus they lay till evening, when, the sun being down,

they uncovered their faces, and found that the sheep had all strayed away, and the dog after them.

"The only plan for us is to go separate ways in search of the flock," said the Knave; "only let us agree to meet here again." They accordingly started in opposite directions; but when the Fool was fairly off, the Knave returned to his place, and lay down as before.

By and by the dog brought the sheep back; so that, when the Fool returned, the Knave got the credit of having found them; for the dog scorned to explain his part in the matter.

As they sat together at supper, the Fool said, "The work is not so easy as I thought. Could we not find a better trade yet?"

"Can you beg?" said the Knave. "A beggar's trade is both easy and profitable. Nothing is required but walking and talking. Then one walks at his own pace, for there is no hurry, and no master, and the same tale does for every door. And, that all may be fair and equal, you shall beg at the front door, whilst I ask an alms at the back."

To this the Fool gladly agreed; and as he was as lean as a hunted cat, charitable people gave him a penny or two from time to time. Meanwhile, the Knave went round to the back yard, where he picked up a fowl, or turkey, or anything that he could lay his hands upon.

When he returned to the Fool, he would say, "See what has been given to me, whilst you have only got a few pence."

At last this made the Fool discontented, and he said, "I should like now to exchange with you. I will go to the back doors, and you to the front."

The Knave consented, and at the next house the Fool went to the back door ; but the mistress of the farm only rated him, and sent him away. Meanwhile, the Knave, from the front, had watched her leave the parlour, and slipping in through the window, he took a ham and a couple of new loaves from the table, and so made off.

When the friends met, the Fool was crestfallen at his ill luck, and the Knave complained that all the burden of their support fell upon him. " See," said he, " what they give me, where you get only a mouthful of abuse ! " And he dined heartily on what he had stolen ; but the Fool only had bits of the breadcrust, and the parings of the ham.

At the next place the Fool went to the front door as before, and the Knave secured a fat goose and some plums in the back yard, which he popped under his cloak. The Fool came away with empty hands, and the Knave scolded him, saying, " Do you suppose that I mean to share this fat goose with a lazy beggar like you ? Go on, and find for yourself." With which he sat down and began to eat the plums, whilst the Fool walked on alone.

After a while, however, the Knave saw a stir in the direction of the farm they had left, and he quickly perceived that the loss of the goose was known, and that the farmer and his men were in pursuit of the thief. So, hastily picking up the goose, he overtook the Fool, and pressed it into his arms, saying, " Dear friend, pardon a passing ill humour, of which I sincerely repent. Are we not partners in good luck and ill ? I was wrong, dear friend ; and, in token of my penitence, the goose

shall be yours alone. And here are a few plums with which you may refresh yourself by the wayside. As for me, I will hasten on to the next farm, and see if I can beg a bottle of wine to wash down the dinner, and drink to our good-fellowship." And before the Fool could thank him, the Knave was off like the wind.

By and by the farmer and his men came up, and found the Fool eating the plums, with the goose on the grass beside him.

They hurried him off to the justice, where his own story met with no credit. The woman of the next farm came up also, and recognised him for the man who had begged at her door the day she lost a ham and two new loaves. In vain he said that these things also had been given to his friend. The friend never appeared; and the poor Fool was whipped and put in the stocks.

Towards evening the Knave hurried up to the village green, where his friend sat doing penance for the theft.

"My dear friend," said he, "what do I see? Is such cruelty possible? But I hear that the justice is not above a bribe, and we must at any cost obtain your release. I am going at once to pawn my own boots and cloak, and everything about me that I can spare, and if you have anything to add, this is no time to hesitate."

The poor Fool begged his friend to draw off his boots, and to take his hat and coat as well, and to make all speed on his charitable errand.

The Knave took all that he could get, and, leaving his friend sitting in the stocks in his shirt-sleeves, he disappeared as swiftly as one could wish a man to carry a reprieve.

For those good folks to whom everything must be explained in full, it may be added that the Knave did not come back, and that he kept the clothes.

It was very hard on the Fool; but what can one expect if he keeps company with a Knave?

IX. A GREAT EMERGENCY

CHAPTER I

We were very happy—I, Rupert, Henrietta, and Baby Cecil. The only thing we found fault with in our lives was that there were so few events in them.

It was particularly provoking, because we were so well prepared for events—any events. Rupert prepared us. He had found a fat old book in the garret, bound in yellow leather, at the end of which were "Directions how to act with presence of mind in any emergency;" and he gave lectures out of this in the kitchen garden.

Rupert was twelve years old. He was the eldest. Then came Henrietta, then I, and last of all Baby Cecil, who was only four. The day I was nine years old, Rupert came into the nursery, holding up his handsome head with the dignified air which became him so well, that I had more than once tried to put it on myself before the nursery looking-glass, and said to me, "You are quite old enough now, Charlie, to learn what to do whatever happens; so every half-holiday, when I am not playing cricket, I'll teach you presence of mind near the cucumber frame, if you're punctual. I've put up a bench."

I thanked him warmly, and the next day he put his head into the nursery at three o'clock in the afternoon, and said—"The lecture."

I jumped up, and so did Henrietta.

"It's not for girls," said Rupert; "women are not expected to do things when there's danger."

"*We* take care of *them*," said I, wondering if my mouth looked like Rupert's when I spoke, and whether my manner impressed Henrietta as much as his impressed me. She sat down again and only said, "I stayed in all Friday afternoon, and worked in bed on Saturday morning to finish your net."

"Come along," said Rupert. "You know I'm very much obliged to you for the net; it's a splendid one."

"I'll bring a camp-stool if there's not room on the bench," said Henrietta cheerfully.

"People never take camp-stools to lectures," said Rupert, and when we got to the cucumber frame we found that the old plank, which he had raised on inverted flower-pots, would have held a much larger audience than he had invited. Opposite to it was a rhubarb-pot, with the round top of a barrel resting on it. On this stood a glass of water. A delightful idea thrilled through me, suggested by an imperfect remembrance of a lecture on chemistry which I had attended.

"Will there be experiments?" I whispered.

"I think not," Henrietta replied. "There are glasses of water at the missionary meetings, and there are no experiments."

Meanwhile Rupert had been turning over the leaves of the yellow leather book. To say the truth, I think he was rather nervous; but if we have a virtue among us it is that of courage; and after dropping the book twice, and drinking all the water at a draught, he found his place, and began.

"*How to act in an emergency.*"

"What's an emergency?" I asked. I was very proud of being taught by Rupert, and anxious to understand everything as we went along.

"You shouldn't interrupt," said Rupert frowning. I am inclined now to think that he could not answer my question off-hand; for though he looked cross then, after referring to the book he answered me: "It's a fire, or drowning, or an apoplectic fit, or anything of that sort." After which explanation, he hurried on. If what he said next came out of his own head, or whether he had learned it by heart, I never knew.

"There is no stronger sign of good-breeding than presence of mind in an———"

"—apoplectic fit," I suggested. I was giving the keenest attention, and Rupert had hesitated, the wind having blown over a leaf too many of the yellow leather book.

"An *emergency*," he shouted, when he had found his place. "Now we'll have one each time. The one for to-day is—How to act in a case of drowning."

To speak the strict truth, I would rather not have thought about drowning. I had my own private horror over a neighbouring milldam, and I had once been very much frightened by a spring-tide at the sea; but cowardice is not an indulgence for one of my race, so I screwed up my lips and pricked my ears to learn my duty in the unpleasant emergency of drowning.

"It doesn't mean being drowned yourself," Rupert continued, "but what to do when another person has been drowned."

The emergency was undoubtedly easier, and I gave a cheerful attention as Rupert began to question us.

"Supposing a man had been drowned in the canal, and was brought ashore, and you were the only people there, what would you do with him?"

I was completely nonplussed. I felt quite sure I could do nothing with him, he would be so heavy; but I felt equally certain that this was not the answer which Rupert expected, so I left the question to Henrietta's readier wit. She knitted her thick eyebrows for some minutes, partly with perplexity, and partly because of the sunshine reflected from the cucumber frame, and then said:

"We should bury him in a vault; Charlie and I *couldn't* dig a grave deep enough."

I admired Henrietta's foresight, but Rupert was furious.

"How *silly* you are!" he exclaimed, knocking over the top of the rhubarb-pot table and the empty glass in his wrath. "Of course I don't mean a dead man. I mean what would you do to bring a partly drowned man to life again?"

"That wasn't what you *said*," cried Henrietta, tossing her head.

"I let you come to my lecture," grumbled Rupert bitterly, as he stooped to set his table right, "and this is the way you behave!"

"I'm very sorry, Rupert dear!" said Henrietta. "Indeed, I only mean to do my best, and I do like your lecture so very much!"

"So do I," I cried, "very, very much!" And by a simultaneous impulse Henrietta and I both clapped our hands vehemently. This restored Rupert's self-complacency, and he bowed and continued the lecture.

From this we learned that the drowned man should be turned over on his face to let the canal water run out of his mouth and ears, and that his wet clothes should be got off, and he should be made dry and warm as quickly as possible, and placed in a comfortable position, with the head and shoulders slightly raised. All this seemed quite feasible to us. Henrietta had dressed and undressed lots of dolls, and I pictured myself filling a hot-water bottle at the kitchen boiler with an air of responsibility that should scare all lighter-minded folk. But the directions for "restoring breathing" troubled our sincere desire to learn; and this even though Henrietta practised for weeks afterwards upon me. I represented the drowned man, and she drew my arms above my head for "*inspiration*" and counted "one, two;" and doubled them and drove them back for "*expiration*;" but it tickled, and I laughed, and we could not feel at all sure that it would have made the drowned man breathe again.

Meanwhile Rupert went on with the course of lectures, and taught us how to behave in the event of a fire in the house, an epidemic in the neighbourhood, a bite from a mad dog, a chase by a mad bull, broken limbs, runaway horses, a chimney on fire, or a young lady burning to death. The lectures were not only delightful in themselves, but they furnished us with a whole set of new games, for Henrietta and I zealously practised every emergency as far as the nature of things would allow. Covering our faces with wet cloths to keep off the smoke, we crept on our hands and knees to rescue a fancy cripple from an imaginary burning house, because of the current of air which Rupert told us was to be found near the

floor. We fastened Baby Cecil's left leg to his right by pocket-handkerchiefs at the ankle, and above and below the knee, pretending that it was broken, and must be kept steady till we could convey him to the doctor. But for some unexplained reason Baby Cecil took offence at this game, and I do not think he could have howled and roared louder under the worst of real compound fractures. We had done it so skilfully, that we were greatly disgusted by his unaccommodating spirit, and his obstinate refusal to be put into the litter we had made out of Henrietta's stilts and a railway rug. We put the Scotch terrier in instead ; but when one end of the litter gave way and he fell out, we were not sorry that the emergency was a fancy one, and that no broken limbs were really dependent upon our well-meant efforts.

There was one thing about Rupert's lectures which disappointed me. His emergencies were all things that happened in the daytime. Now I should not have liked the others to know that I was ever afraid of anything ; but, really and truly, I was sometimes a little frightened —not of breaking my leg, or a house on fire, or an apoplectic fit, or anything of that sort, but—of things in the dark. Every half-holiday I hoped there would be something about what to do with robbers or ghosts, but there never was. I do not think there can have been any emergencies of that kind in the yellow leather book.

This introduces us to the children, and succeeding chapters tell many amusing events in their school life. Charlie's closest friend at school is Fred Johnson, the son of a well-to-do barge-owner. Fred is full of stories of adventure and exploration and the two boys decide to seek adventures for themselves. They

hide on a barge run by "Captain" Rowe who discovers them and enters into the spirit of their adventures. At their first stopping place each of the boys sends a letter to his mother Here is Fred's letter (from Chapter VIII).

"DEAR MOTHER,

"Charlie and I are going to run away at least by the time you get this we have run away but never mind for wen weve seen the wurld were cumming back we took the pi wich I hope you wont mind as we had no brekfust and I'll bring back the dish we send our best love and I've no more to tell you to-day from your affectionate son FRED."

Unknown to them Mr. Rowe also writes a letter to Johnson's father and this is the "captain's" effort (also from Chapter VIII).

"MR. JOHNSON. HONERD SIR.

"i rites in duty bound to acqaint you that the young genlemen is with me, looking out for Advenchurs and asking your pardon i wish they may find them as innercent as 2 Babes in the Wood on the London and Lancingford Canal were they come aboard quite unknown to me and blowed theirselves up with lucifers the fust go off and youve no need to trubble yourself sir ill keep my I on them and bring em safe to hand with return cargo and hoping you'll excuse the stamp not expecting to have to rite from the fust stoppige your obedient humble servant

"SAMUEL ROWE."

Mr. Rowe does his best to keep his promise but the boys, suspecting he intends to spoil their adventures and take them back home, give him the slip when they get to London, and the following extract shows what happened to them there.

CHAPTER XII

POLICEMEN are very useful people. I do not know how we should have got from the London Bridge Pier to the Fenchurch Street Station if it had not been that Fred told me he knew one could ask policemen the way to places. There is nothing to pay, which I was very glad of, as the canvas bag was getting empty.

Once or twice they helped us through emergencies. We had to go from one footpath to another, straight across the street, and the street was so full of carts and cabs and drays and omnibuses, that one could see that it was quite an impossibility. We did it, however, for the policeman made us. I said, "Hadn't we better wait till the crowd has gone?" But the policeman laughed, and said then we had better take lodgings close by and wait at the window. So we did it. Fred said the captain once ran in a little cutter between two big ships that were firing into him, but I do not think that can have been much worse than running between a backing dray, full of rolling barrels, and a hansom cab pulled up and ramping like a rocking-horse at the lowest point of the rockers.

When we were safely on the other pavement we thanked the policeman very much, and then went on, asking our way till we got to Fenchurch Street.

If anything could smell nastier than John's berth in Nine Elms it is Fenchurch Street Station. And I think it is worse in this way: John's berth smelt horribly, but it was warm and weather-tight. You never swallow a drop of pure air in Fenchurch Street Station, and yet

you cannot find a corner in which you can get out of the draughts.

With one gale blowing on my right from an open door, and another gale blowing on my left down some steps, and nasty smells blowing from every point of the compass, I stood at a dirty little hole in a dirty wooden wall and took our tickets. I had to stand on tiptoe to make the young man see me.

"What is the cheapest kind of tickets you have, if you please?" I inquired, with the canvas bag in my hand.

"Third class," said the young man, staring very hard at me, which I thought rather rude. "Except working men's tickets, and they're not for this train."

"Two third-class tickets for Victoria Dock, then, if you please," said I.

"Single or return?" said he.

"I beg your pardon?" I said, for I was puzzled.

"Are you coming back to-day?" he inquired.

"Oh, dear no!" said I, for some of the captain's voyages had lasted for years; but the question made me anxious, as I knew nothing of railway rules, and I added, "Does it matter?"

"Not by no means," replied the young man smartly, and he began to whistle, but stopped himself to ask, "Custom House or Tidal Basin?"

I had no alternative but to repeat, "I *beg* your pardon?"

He put his face right through the hole and looked at me. "Will you take your ticket for Custom House or Tidal Basin?" he repeated; "either will do for Victoria Docks."

"Then whichever you please," said I, as politely as I could.

The young man took out two tickets and snapped them impatiently in something; and as a fat woman was squeezing me from behind I was glad to take what I could get and go back to Fred

He was taking care of our two bundles and the empty pie-dish.

That pie-dish was a good deal in our way. Fred wanted to get rid of it, and said he was sure his mother would not want us to be bothered with it; but Fred had promised in his letter to bring it back, and he could not break his word. I told him so, but I said as he did not like to be seen with it I would carry it. So I did.

With a strong breeze aft, we were driven upstairs in the teeth of a gale, and ran before a high wind down a platform where, after annoying one of the railway men very much by not being able to guess which was the train, and having to ask him, we got in among a lot of rough-looking people, who were very civil and kind. A man with a black face and a white jacket said he would tell us when we got to Custom House, and he gave me his seat by the window, that I might look out.

What struck me as rather odd was that everybody in the third-class carriage seemed to have bundles like ours, and yet they couldn't all be running away. One thin woman with a very troublesome baby had three. Perhaps it is because portmanteaus and things of that sort are rather expensive.

Fred was opposite to me. It was a bright sunny morning, a fresh breeze blew, and in the sunlight the backs of endless rows of shabby houses looked more

cheerful than usual, though very few of the gardens had anything in them but dirt and cats, and very many of the windows had the week's wash hanging out on strings and poles. The villages we had passed on the canal banks all looked pretty and interesting, but I think that most of the places we saw out of the window of the train would look very ugly on a dull day.

I fancy there were poplar-trees at a place called Poplar, and that I thought it must be called after them ; but Fred says No, and we have never been there since, so I cannot be sure about it. If not, I must have dreamt it.

I did fall asleep in the corner, I know, I was so very much tired, and we had had no breakfast, and I sat on the side where the wind blows in, which I think helped to make me sleepy. I was wakened partly by the pie-dish slipping off my lap and partly by Fred saying in an eager tone :

" Oh, Charlie ! LOOK ! *Are they all ships ?* "

We stuffed our heads through the window, and my hat was nearly blown away, so the man with the black face and the white jacket gave it to the woman with the troublesome baby to take care of for me, and he held us by our legs for fear we should fall out.

On we flew ! There was wind enough in our faces to have filled the barge-sail three times over, and Fred licked his lips and said, " I do believe there's salt in it ! "

But what he woke me up to show me drove me nearly wild. When I had seen a couple of big barges lying together with their two bare masts leaning towards each other I used to think how dignified and beautiful they looked. But here were hundreds of masts, standing

as thick as tree-trunks in a fir-wood, and they were not bare poles, but lofty and slender, and crossed by innumerable yards, and covered with ropes in orderly profusion, which showed in the sunshine as cobwebs shine out in a field in summer. Gay flags and pennons fluttered in the wind; brown sails, grey sails, and gleaming white sails went up and down; and behind it all the water sparkled and dazzled our eyes like the glittering reflections from a mirror moving in the sun.

As we ran nearer the ropes looked thicker, and we could see the devices on the flags. And suddenly, straining his eyes at the yards of a vessel in the thick of the ship-forest, on which was something black, like a spider with only four legs, Fred cried, "It's a sailor!"

I saw him quite well. And seeing him higher up than on any tree one could ever climb, with the sunny sky above him and the shining water below him, I could only mutter out with envious longing—"How happy he must be!"

CHAPTER XIII

THE man in the white jacket helped us out, smiling as he did so, so that his teeth shone like ivory in his black face. We took the pie-dish and our bundles, and thanked him very much, and the train went on and took him with it, which we felt sorry for. For when one *is* out in the world, you know, one sometimes feels rather lonely, and sorry to part with a kind friend.

Everybody else went through a little gate into the street, so we did the same. It was a very dirty street, with houses on one side and the railway on the other.

There were cabbages and carrots and old shoes and fishes' heads and oyster-shells and potato-peelings in the street, and a goat was routing among it all with its nose, as if it had lost something and hoped to find it by-and-by.

Places like this always seemed to depress Fred's courage. Besides which, he was never in good spirits when he had to go long without food, which made me fear he would not bear being cast adrift at sea without provisions as well as his grandfather had done. I was not surprised when he said:

"*What* a place! And I don't believe one can get anything fit to eat, and I am so hungry!"

I looked at the houses. There was a pork-butcher's shop and a real butcher's shop, and a slop shop, and a seedy jeweller's shop with second-hand watches, which looked as if nothing would ever make them go, and a small toy and sweetmeat shop, but not a place that looked like breakfast. I had taken Fred's bundle because he was so tired, and I suppose it was because I was staring helplessly about that a dirty boy, a good deal bigger than either of us, came up and pulled his dirty hair and said:

"Carry your things for you, sir?"

"No, thank you," said I, moving on with the bundles and the pie-dish; but as the boy would walk by me I said:

"We want some breakfast very much, but we haven't much money." And, remembering the cost of our supper, I added, "Could we get anything here for about twopence-halfpenny or threepence apiece?"

There was a moment's pause, and then the boy gave

a long whistle.

"Vy, I thought you wos swells!" said he.

I really do not know whether it was because I did not like to be supposed to be a poor person when it came to the point, or whether it was because of that bad habit of mine of which even Weston's ballad has not quite cured me, of being ready to tell people more about my affairs than it can be interesting for them to hear or discreet for me to communicate, but I replied at once: "We are gentlemen; but we are going in search of adventures, and we don't want to spend more money than we can help till we see what we may want it for when we get to foreign countries."

"You're going to sea, then, hare you?" said the boy, keeping up with us.

"Yes," said I; "but could you tell us where to get something to eat before we go?"

"There's a shop I knows on," said our new friend, "where they sells prime pudding at a penny a slice. The plums goes all through and no mistake. Three slices would be threepence: one for you, one for him, and one for my trouble in showing you the way. Threepence more's a quart of stout, and we drink fair by turns. Shall I take your purse and pay it for you? They might cheat a stranger."

"No, thank you," said I; "but we should like some pudding if you will show us the way."

The slices were small, but then they were very heavy. We had two each. I rejected the notion of porter, and Fred said he was not thirsty; but I turned back again into the shop to ask for a glass of water for myself. The woman gave it me very civilly, looking as she did

so with a puzzled manner, first at me and then at my bundles and the pie-dish. As she took back the tumbler she nodded her head towards the dirty boy, who stood in the doorway, and said :

" Is that young chap a companion of yours, my dear ? "

" Oh, dear no," said I, " only he showed us the way here."

" Don't have nothing to do with him," she whispered ; " he's a bad un."

In spite of this warning, however, as there was no policeman to be seen, and the boy would keep up with us, I asked him the way to Victoria Dock.

It was not so easy to get to the ships as I had expected. There were gates to pass through, and they were kept by a porter. He let some people in and turned others back.

" Have you got an order to see the docks ? " asked the boy.

I confessed that we had not, but added that we wanted very much to get in.

" My eyes ! " said the bad boy, doubling himself in a fit of amusement, " I believe you're both going for stowaways."

" What do you mean by stowaways ? " I asked.

" Stowaways is chaps that hides aboard vessels going out of port, to get their passage free gratis for nothing."

" Do a good many manage it ? " I asked with an anxious mind.

" There ain't a vessel leaves the docks without one and sometimes more aboard. The captain never looks that way, not by no accident whatsoever. He don't lift no tarpaulins while the ship's in dock. But when

she gets to sea the captain gets his eyesight back, and he takes it out of the stowaways for their wittles then. Oh, yes, rather so!" said the bad boy.

There was a crowd at the gates.

"Hold your bundles down on your right side," said the boy, "and go in quickly after any respectable-looking cove you see."

Fred had got his own bundle now, and we followed our guide's directions, and went through the gates after an elderly, well-dressed man. The boy seemed to try to follow us, squeezing very close up to me, but the gatekeeper stopped him. When we were on the other side I saw him bend down and wink backwards at the gatekeeper through his straddled legs. Then he stood derisively on his head. After which he went away as a catherine-wheel, and I saw him no more.

We were among the ships at last! Vessels very different from Mr. Rowe's barge, or even the three-penny steamboat. Lofty and vast, with shining decks of marvellous cleanliness, and giant figure-heads like dismembered Jins out of some Arabian tale. Streamers of many colours high up in the forest of masts, and seamen of many nations on the decks and wharves below, moved idly in the breeze, which was redolent of many kinds of cargo. Indeed, if the choice of our ship had not been our chief care, the docks and warehouses would have fascinated us little less than the shipping. Here were huge bales of cotton packed as thickly as bricks in a brick-field. There were wine-casks innumerable, and in another place the air was aromatic with so large a cargo of coffee that it seemed as if no more could be required in this country for some generations

It was very entertaining, and Fred was always calling to me to look at something new, but my mind was with the shipping. There was a good deal of anxiety on it too. The sooner we chose our ship and " stowed away " the better. I hesitated between sailing-vessels and steamers. I did not believe that one of the captain's adventures happened on board any ship that could move faster than it could sail. And yet I was much attracted by some grand-looking steamships. Even their huge funnels had a look of power, I thought, among the masts, like old and hollow oaks in a wood of young and slender trees.

One of these was close in dock, and we could see her well. There were some casks on deck, and by them lay a piece of tarpaulin which caught my eye, and recalled what the bad boy had said about captains and stowaways. Near the gangway were standing two men who did not seem to be sailors. They were respectably dressed, one had a book and a pencil, and they looked, I thought, as if they might have authority to ask our business in the docks, so I drew Fred back under shelter of some piled-up boxes.

" When does she sail ? " asked the man with the book.

" To-morrow morning, sir," replied the other.

And then they crossed the gangway and went into a warehouse opposite.

It was noon, and being the men's dinner-time, the docks were not very busy. At this moment there was not a soul in sight. I grasped Fred's arm, and hoisted the bundle and pie-dish well under my own.

" That's our ship," I said triumphantly ; " come along ! "

We crossed the gangway unperceived. "The casks!" I whispered, and we made our way to the corner I had noticed. If Fred's heart beat as chokingly as mine did, we were far too much excited to speak, as we settled ourselves into a corner, not quite as cosy as our hiding-place in the forehold of the barge; and drew the tarpaulin over our heads, resting some of the weight of it on the casks behind, that we might not be smothered.

I have waited for the kitchen kettle to boil when Fred and I wanted to make "hot grog" with raspberry-vinegar and nutmeg at his father's house; I have waited for a bonfire to burn up, when we wanted to roast potatoes; I have waited for it to leave off raining when my mother would not let us go out for fear of catching colds; but I never knew time pass so slowly as when Fred and I were stowaways on board the steamship *Atalanta*.

He was just beginning to complain, when we heard men coming on board. This amused us for a bit, but we were stowed so that we could not see them, and we dared not look out. Neither dared we speak, except when we heard them go a good way off, and then we whispered. So second after second, and minute after minute, and hour after hour went by, and Fred became very restless.

"She's to sail in the morning," I whispered.

"But where are we to get dinner and tea and supper?" asked Fred indignantly. I was tired, and felt cross on my own account.

"You said yourself we might have to weigh out our food with a bullet like Admiral Bligh, next week."

"He must have had something, or he couldn't have

weighed it," retorted Fred; "and how do we know if they'll ever give us anything to eat on board this ship?"

"I dare say we can buy food at first, till they find us something to do for our meals," said I.

"How much money is there left?" asked Fred.

I put my hand into my pocket for the canvas bag—but it was gone!

There could be little doubt that the bad boy had picked my pocket at the gate, but I had a sense of guiltiness about it, for most of the money was Fred's. This catastrophe completely overwhelmed him, and he cried and grumbled till I was nearly at my wit's end. I could not stop him, though heavy steps were coming quite close to us.

"Sh! Sh!" muttered I, "if you go on like that they'll certainly find us, and then we shall have managed all this for nothing, and might as well have gone back with old Rowe."

"Which, wind and weather permitting, young gentlemen, you will," said a voice just above us, though we did not hear it.

"I wish we could," sobbed Fred, "only there's no money now. But I'm going to get out of this beastly hole any way."

"You're a nice fellow to tell me about your grandfather," said I, in desperate exasperation; "I don't believe you've the pluck for a common sailor, let alone a Great Discoverer."

"You've hit the right nail on the head there, Master Charles," said the voice.

"Fiddlesticks about my grandfather!" said Fred.

In the practical experiences of the last three days my

faith in Fred's tales had more than once been rather rudely shaken; but the contemptuous tone in which he disposed of our model, the Great Sea Captain, startled me so severely that I do not think I felt any additional shock of astonishment when strong hands lifted the tarpaulin from our heads, and—grave amid several grinning faces—we saw the barge-master.

How he reproached us, and how Fred begged him to take us home, and how I besought him to let us go to sea, it would be tedious to relate. I have no doubt now that he never swerved from his intention of taking us back, but he preferred to do it by fair means if possible. So he fubbed me off, and took us round the docks to amuse us, and talked of dinner in a way that went to Fred's heart.

But when I found that we were approaching the gates once more, I stopped dead short. As we went about the docks I had replied to the barge-master's remarks as well as I could, but I had never ceased thinking of the desire of my heart, and I resolved to make one passionate appeal to his pity.

"Mr. Rowe," I said, in a choking voice, "please don't take me home! I would give anything in the world to go to sea. Why shouldn't I be a sailor when I want to? Take Fred home if he wants to go, and tell them that I'm all right, and mean to do my duty and come back a credit to them."

Mr. Rowe's face was inscrutable, and I pleaded harder.

"You're an old navy man, you know, Rowe," I said, "and if you recommended me to the captain of one of these ships for a cabin-boy, I'll be bound they'd take me."

"Mr. Charles," said the old man earnestly, "you couldn't go for a cabin-boy, you don't know———"

"You think I can't rough it," I interrupted impatiently, "but try me, and see. I know what I'm after," I added, consequentially; "and I'll bear what I have to bear, and do what I'm set to do if I can get afloat. I'll be a captain some day, and give orders instead of taking them."

Mr. Rowe drew up to attention and took off his hat. "And wanting an able-bodied seaman in them circumstances, sir, for any voyage you likes to make," said he emphatically, "call for Samuel Rowe." He then wiped the passing enthusiasm from the crown of his head with his handkerchief, and continued—with the judicious diplomacy for which he was remarkable—"But of course, sir, it's the Royal Navy you'll begin in, as a midshipman. It's seamanship *you* wants to learn, not swabbing decks and emptying buckets below whilst others is aloft. Your father's son would be a good deal out of place, sir, as cabin-boy in a common trading vessel."

Mr. Rowe's speech made an impression, and I think he saw that it did.

"Look here, Master Charles," said he, "you've a gentleman's feelings: come home now, and bear me out with your widowed mother and your only sister, sir, and with Master Fred's father, that I'm in duty bound to, and promised to deliver safe and sound as return cargo, wind and weather permitting."

"Oh, come home! come home!" reiterated Fred.

I stood speechless for a minute or two. All around and above me rose the splendid masts, trellised with the

rigging that I longed to climb. The refreshing scent of tar mingled with the smells of the various cargoes. The coming and going of men who came and went to and fro the ends of the earth stirred all my pulses to restlessness. And above the noises of their coming and going I heard the lapping of the water of the incoming tide against the dock, which spoke with a voice more powerful than that of Mr. Rowe.

And yet I went with him.

It was not because the canvas bag was empty, not because Fred would not stay with me (for I had begun to think that the captain's grandson was not destined to be the hero of exploits on the ocean), but when Mr. Rowe spoke of my widowed mother and of Henrietta, he touched a sore point on my conscience. I had had an uneasy feeling from the first that there was something rather mean in my desertion of them. Pride and, I hope, some less selfish impulse, made me feel that I could never be quite happy—even on the mainmast top—if I knew that I had behaved ill to them.

I could not very well speak, but I turned round and began to walk in the direction of the dock-gates. Mr. Rowe behaved uncommonly kindly. He said nothing more, but turned as if I had given the word of command, and walked respectfully just behind me. I resolved not to look back, and I did not. I was quite determined too about one thing; Mr. Rowe should never be able to say he had seen me make a fool of myself after I had made up my mind. But in reality I had very hard work to keep from beginning to cry, just when Fred was beginning to leave off.

I screwed up my eyes and kept them dry, however,

but as we went through the gate there came in a sailor with a little bundle like ours, and a ship's name on his hat. His hat sat as if a gale were just taking it off, and his sea-blue shirt was blown open by breezes that my back was turned upon. In spite of all I could do one tear got through my eyelashes and ran down, and I caught it on my lips.

It was a very bitter tear, and as salt as the salt, salt sea!

NOTES AND EXERCISES

These notes and exercises are intended to provide a series of suggestions of ways which have been found successful in training children to appreciate with intelligence and affection the most important aspects of a great writer's works ; and above all, to give them a desire to read some or all of the complete works. This can be done without the use of technical literary terms, and any formal exercises in grammar, paraphrase, précis or word-building have therefore been omitted. More often than not such exercises destroy a child's love and appreciation of beautiful literature. They have their place in a child's education, and it is assumed that a simple course of lessons in grammar, etc., is proceeding concurrently ; but it is hoped that these beautiful stories will not be spoiled for children by making them, or any part of them, into merely technical exercises.

To the enthusiastic teacher many other ways will occur of developing the child's love of fine stories and good English, but it is hoped that these notes may prove helpful and suggestive.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to add that the class library should contain at least the books from which these extracts are drawn. One or more of them might well be the " supplementary readers " for the year's work.

AN IDYLL OF THE WOOD

"An Idyll of the Wood" illustrates Mrs. Ewing's passionate love for birds. The thrush in this sad but very beautiful story becomes almost a human being. It also shows how deeply she was stirred by the spirit of the woods and how she respected the rarer plants and flowers that grew there.

NOTES

There are not many unusual words or phrases in this story. A few of the most interesting are :—

Idyll comes from a Greek word meaning a short highly wrought poem describing some country scene.

Ambrosial. Ambrosia was the food which the Greek gods were supposed to eat. It was thought that those who eat it

could not die. Ambrosial is now used to describe anything very delightful or fragrant.

Lichens are one of the simplest kinds of plant life without stem or leaves. They grow on the bark of trees or rocks. Mosses belong to the same class of plants but usually have small stems and leaves.

ORAL QUESTIONS

1. "You know where the rare fern grows—a habitat yet unnoted in scientific pages." If it *were* noted what do you think would happen? Why are so many of our woods and valleys now so destitute of ferns and flowers? Find out if you can some rare flowers that no longer grow in your locality that once grew there.

2. Why do you think Mrs. Ewing makes the street singer sing

"Love of truth
And joys of youth"

Look up in your dictionary the meaning of the word "irony" and see if that helps you. There are many very clever uses of irony in Mrs. Ewing's works.

3. With the book closed try to describe as nearly as possible in Mrs. Ewing's words:

1. The cottage in which the sailor's mother lived.
2. The way in which the thrush escaped from the ship and what the thrush saw as it flew over the sea.

4. In this story there are many words that imitate sounds. With your teacher's help make a list on the blackboard.

WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. "He was one of those good people who stop a dozen times in one street and look at everything as they go along." Write in the sailor's words as if he were telling the story what he saw and did on his way home.

2. The thrush of this story had four homes. Write a short description of each.

3. The song of the thrush beginning "Joy! Joy!" is given on page 4. Can you write what a seagull would say in a similar state of happiness, following Mrs. Ewing's description, phrase by phrase?

DADDY DARWIN'S DOVECOT

NOTES

With the help of your dictionary and your teacher write down in a note book kept specially for the purpose the meaning of all the difficult and unusual words and phrases in this extract. Don't forget in all such exercises to put each of these words into a sentence which you have made for yourself. Do it something like this :—

Fustian is a kind of hard-wearing cotton or cotton and linen cloth with a velvety appearance. Corduroy and moleskin are fustians. The word comes from Fostat, a suburb of Cairo in Egypt, from which place the material was first brought here. From the time of King James I. however, it has been made in England, in and around Manchester.

Transept. The dictionary says this comes from two Latin words, *trans* meaning across and *septum* meaning an enclosure. The word is the name of that part of a church which is built at right angles (across) to the main body of the church so that the plan of the whole building is a cross. The transept therefore forms the arms of the cross. Very many churches are built on this plan.

Fugue. A fugue is a piece of music in which the tune or theme is repeated a bar or two later by another voice or instrument to form a second, third, or even fourth and fifth part, e.g., in the well-known anthem mentioned in the story the soprano voice sings a phrase and as soon as he has sung it the alto sings it whilst he continues with the rest of the anthem, both working up to a fine climax. Can you see how the name fugue, therefore, is derived from the Latin word *fuga* meaning a flight ? Jack's feelings make it quite clear.

Apprentice. In the old days pauper children, as well as others, were apprenticed to employers for seven years or more. During that time they had to work for the employer, who was to teach them his business and feed and clothe them. Cartloads of little orphans of seven years of age and upwards were sent from London to the North of England to be " apprenticed " to the owners of the new factories.

Grotesque comes from the French word *grotte* meaning a cave. In the old caves or grottoes the paintings and carvings were

very crude and ugly, therefore things of similar ugliness came to be called grotesque.

Paraphernalia originally meant in Greek *para* beyond and *pherné* a dowry, in other words all a bride's belongings, clothing, ornaments, &c. It is now applied to any additional luggage, furniture, apparatus, etc., belonging to anybody.

PHRASES

There are many quaint and unusual phrases in this story. Many of them are old words and phrases no longer used by educated people. Examples are :—

not to say mazelin yet—not really feebleminded.

He's fettling up all along—he's putting things in order all the time.

choose who they were—whoever they were.

last feather of the shuttle—This is a very touching metaphor in which Daddy likens his life to a shuttlecock which has been knocked about till only one poor feather is left.

Macduff is one of the chief characters in Shakespeare's play "Macbeth." Macduff hears the news that all his children have been killed, and exclaims "All my pretty 'uns." In the first sentence of the next paragraph but one there is another quotation from Shakespeare—this time from "Hamlet." In this play the line occurs "To take up arms against a sea of troubles."

1 James I., c. 29. If this means Chapter 29 of the 1st Act of Parliament passed in King James I.'s reign, what does 2 Geo. III., c. 29 lower down the page mean ? How do you account for the fact that the laws were so severe against pigeon killing ?

Settle the business out of Court. The proprietor of the shooting gallery was anxious to pay Daddy Darwin without letting the case go before a magistrate in a police court. Why ?

ORAL QUESTIONS

1. If your teacher writes on the blackboard two columns, one headed Jack and one Daddy, make two lists of words and phrases showing how Jack's character differs from Daddy's.

e.g.	**Jack**	**Daddy**
	resourceful	unenterprising
	generous	miserly
	self-reliant	dependent
	brave	timid

Mention also any good qualities that Daddy had and Jack hadn't.

2. Act as a little play the posy scene between Jack and Phœbe.

3. Notice how Mrs. Ewing is able to make her readers feel what the chief characters in the book also feel. The best examples are :—

Jack's emotions

1. In the church.
2. When he recovered the pigeons.
3. When Daddy was dying.

What was the feeling in each case and why ?

WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. There are several errors in Jack's letter on page 26. Rewrite the letter as correctly as you can.

2. Write, as if it were a scene from a play, the talk between Daddy and the parson's daughter when she came to persuade him to send Jack to Church and Sunday School.

3. Do you think Phœbe would make Jack a good wife, and if so, why ? or

Do you think Jack would make Phœbe a good husband, and if so, why ?

4. The choir-master said " You two lads are singing like bumble bees in a pitcher "—a very effective simile. Daddy Darwin when dying said he was at " t' last feather of the shuttle," a very pitiful metaphor. Make a list of two or three other similes and metaphors from this story.

LOB LIE-BY-THE-FIRE

NOTES

Bastinadoed comes from the Spanish *bastonada* from *baston* a stick, a baton. To bastinado is to punish by beating the soles of the feet with a rod, stick, or cane, a method frequently used in Eastern countries in days gone by.

Vinaigrette comes from the French *vinaigre* meaning vinegar. It was a box with holes in the top through which ladies might smell the aromatic vinegar with which a sponge inside the box was soaked. It was used as ladies now use bottles of smelling salts.

Protégé is one under the care and protection of another. It is the French word for protected.

Cairngorms are a kind of yellow brown variety of rock crystals found on Cairngorm, a mountain in Scotland, and used when polished for brooches and pendants.

Farm-bailiff is the man who manages the farm for the owner of it. In Scotland he was called a *grieve* which is from the old Saxon word *gerefa*. We in England used to call them *reeves*.

Siberian Crabs are the fruit of a tree (originally brought from Siberia) which bears small bright-coloured apples.

St. Vitus's dance is the popular name for the disease *chorea* which comes from the Greek *choreia*, a dancing or jumping. It consists of jerking movements of the muscles and limbs which the patient is unable to control. St. Vitus was one of the earliest Christian martyrs, and it was thought by many people suffering from this kind of disease that if they prayed to St. Vitus he would cure them.

ORAL QUESTIONS

1. Which of the two Scotsmen do you think was the better man ? Discuss this question with your teacher.

2. Mention two examples of each of the following :—

   a. Mrs. Ewing's sense of humour.
   b. The superstition of the country folk.
   c. The gipsy strain in John.

3. Which was better for John :—

   1. To be looked after entirely by Thomasina.
   2. To be looked after entirely by Miss Betty and Miss Kitty.
   3. To be looked after by all three ?

4. Act the scene where " Lob " is discovered at last in the kitchen.

WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. How do you account for the fact that the one Scotsman drove John away and the second Scot was able to make him return home.

2. Re-write in good English the Scotman's speeches on pages 70-73. Why did Mrs. Ewing go to the trouble of reproducing the Scottish way of speaking ?

3. Write the story of the recapture of the cockatoo as if the cockatoo were telling it.

4. Show that John really was the "Luck of Lingborough" from the moment he was found by the ladies.

5. From the list of wonders on pages 79, 80 write an account of what work John was doing secretly on the farm.

JACKANAPES

Here again the picture of the English village is almost perfect. You will notice we are introduced to the Green and the people on it by the Goose, for he knows everybody and he sees everything.

This story is so beautiful and so tender (tears are always very near the surface) that it is doubtful whether Mrs. Ewing or any one else could have written it except from a humorous standpoint. There are very few more beautiful descriptions in the whole of English literature.

The story is of the time of Napoleon Buonaparte and gives a very good picture of the state of feeling in England at that time. In fact it is good history as well as good literature.

NOTES

A few of the most interesting words and phrases in this story are here worked out for you by means of the dictionary and encyclopedia. Do the rest for yourself :—

Martinmas. Michaelmas. Michaelmas is September 29th and is the day on which a special service (mass) was, and still is, held in honour of St. Michael, the Archangel. The goose was particularly interested in Michaelmas because by that date geese are supposed to be fattened up and in perfect condition for eating.

Martinmas (St. Martin's day) is November 11th, and is specially observed in Scotland.

Nankeen is the name of a cotton cloth which originally came from Nanking in China.

Accoutrements means military dress, ornaments, and weapons. It comes through the old French word *couture* (a seam) from the Latin word *consutura* which means a stitching together.

Sabretache is a leather pocket suspended from the sword belt.

Aureole comes from the Latin word *aureolus* (made of gold). In ancient paintings the heads of very holy people were surrounded by a band of golden light, a halo, an aureole.

Lych-gate (sometimes spelt *lich-gate*) means a corpse gate, from the Anglo-Saxon *lic* meaning a corpse. It is a covered gateway to a churchyard.

Gentleman of the Road means a highwayman, a robber. Some of these thieves made a great show of being polite and "gentlemanly" whilst they threatened and robbed.

Gretna Green, a village 10 miles N.N.W. of Carlisle, to which young people from England used to run away to get married against their parents' wishes and the English law, but according to the Scottish law.

Downing Street. Number 10, Downing Street, is now the official residence of the Prime Minister. In 1815, the year of Waterloo, most Government documents were addressed from Downing Street, including what we now call casualty lists. Since that time huge Government offices have been built in the neighbourhood of Downing Street.

Chippendale arm chairs. Thomas Chippendale was a very clever maker of furniture in the latter half of the 18th Century. Furniture designed and made by him or under his influence is now very highly prized.

ORAL QUESTIONS

1. The goose says "Ga! ga!" Such words may be called sound words. Make a list of a dozen other words which try to imitate the sound.

2. Choose what you consider the most touching passage in this story and explain why you think so.

3. In the same way discuss what you think is the most humorous passage in the story.

4. The battle of Flodden was fought in 1513. The sexton's father knew a man who as a boy carried arrows for the battle. Was this possible? See which of you can bring to school the *earliest* memory of any historical event from your parents, grandparents, or (and in this case you are almost sure to win) from your great-grandparents.

WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. Without referring to the book, write, in Aunt Jessamine's own words, her instructions to Jackanapes just before the arrival of his Grandfather.

2. Write an account of what happened on the village green in the course of the story.

3. Write in your own words how Jackanapes became the owner of Lollo. When you've quite finished refer to the book and see if there are any important things you have missed out.

MRS OVERTHEWAY'S REMEMBRANCES

It must be remembered that this selection is but a small part of the whole story. It is in fact only the beginning and the end. The other stories told by Mrs. Overtheway are just as good, but very different.

NOTES

There are few difficult words in this selection, but find out the meaning of any you do not know with the aid of your dictionary:—

Imminent comes from the Latin *immineo* meaning "I hang over" hence the word means hanging over or threatening to fall or occur.

Catastrophe comes from the Greek *kata* down and *strepho* I turn, hence its meaning of overthrowing, or disaster.

Arrogance from the Latin *ad* meaning to or for, and *rogo* I desire or ask; hence its present meaning of expecting special privileges and special respect.

Albatross is a large web-footed sea-bird which lives on desolate islands and crags. Coleridge's famous poem "The Ancient Mariner" is based on the story of an albatross which was shot by the Mariner. You should all read this poem.

John Bunyan (1628—1688), a very pious and good man, wrote his best known work, "The Pilgrim's Progress," whilst in prison for breaking the laws against the holding of meetings by Puritans and Catholics. In this book many of the people are named after their characters, *e.g.*, Mr. Worldly Wiseman, Timorous, or by other invented names.

Kerguelen's Land, a large rocky island in the Antarctic Ocean, is named after a Breton sailor who discovered it in 1772. In 1776 Captain Cook visited it and called it Desolation Island. It was annexed by France in 1792.

ORAL QUESTIONS

1. With the book closed see how many points in the description of Mrs. Overtheway you can remember.

2. Father Albatross has a very poor opinion of men, and regards birds as far superior. Why?

3. Why were the birds not afraid of the men and the dog?

4. Act the scene on the island when the two albatrosses were watching the captain, and his men, and the dog. Don't forget to include the birds.

5. Which do you think are the three or four most humorous touches in this selection.

WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. The albatross saw the captain writing a letter to his daughter. Write that letter.

2. Mrs. Overtheway's story ends with the sighting of a ship. Finish the story of the rescue, and when you have done it find a similar scene in the story of Robinson Crusoe.

3. Read the scene of Robinson Crusoe's wreck and landing on the island, and then write an account of your own of how you imagine the Captain and his men landed. Remember that Kerguelen's Land is in a *cold* region.

JAN OF THE WINDMILL

This story is one of the longest and most varied that Mrs. Ewing wrote. It has a fuller and stronger plot than most of her books. This extract has been chosen because it shows Mrs. Ewing in rather a different light. In this story she is writing in a less humorous, less whimsical style. The narrative is more direct and rather more attention is paid to the older people. In fact this book is more like a real novel.

The extract we have chosen begins with the old white horse which the Squire, Amabel's father, had rescued from misery.

NOTES

Bonne is the French for a nurse or a nursery governes

Will-o'-the-wisp or **Jack-a-Lantern** or **Corpse Candle** is a mysterious light which appears over swamps and marshes at night. It is not definitely known what causes it but there are many queer stories told in old folk-lore about the way in which it has led many people to death in the swamps.

Dilemma, a state in which evils or obstacles are present whichever way one turns so that it is difficult to choose.

Eglantine is an old name for sweet-brier, a member of the rose family.

Bombazine comes from the Greek word *bombyx* meaning a silk worm. It is an old-fashioned cloth woven of silk or cotton one way (warp) and of worsted the other way (weft).

Sal-volatile is a spirituous solution of carbonate of ammonia flavoured with aromatics. It is much used in smelling salts and in making up nasty medicines.

Eau-de-Cologne is a perfumed spirit originally invented at Cologne in Germany.

Ascetic comes from the Greek word *asketos* meaning exercised or disciplined. An ascetic is one who denies himself all kinds of pleasures and lives a very severe, austere life.

PHRASES

Like dropping shots. An effective simile meaning that Amabel's questions came at Jan like a series of shots from a gun.

Foresters' Dinner. The Foresters is the name of some Friendly Society which has an annual dinner.

ORAL QUESTIONS

1. Act the scene in the wood.

2. With your teacher's help find out all you can about the plants and flowers mentioned in this story. If you can get specimens of any of them make drawings of them.

3. This is the third example of Bogy we have had in these stories. Find out the other two and then discuss whether you think it wise to use Bogy as a means of getting children to behave.

WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. "She was a very Will-o'-the-wisp for wandering." Without referring to the book show how this is true of Amabel.

2. Describe the sign board when it was finished.

3. Mention the incidents in the story which show :—

a. Jan's modesty. *b*. Jan's kindness.
c. Jan's quick-wittedness. *d*. Jan's love of beautiful colours.

4. In the same way illustrate four of Amabel's chief qualities.

WE AND THE WORLD

This, like "Jan of the Windmill," is a long novel dealing with many scenes and characters, young and old. Our extracts give only the very slightest idea of the almost perfect charm of this school story. It is full of incident and interest. Older people play a large part in this story, and not the least effective chapters are those dealing with Jack's well-meaning, but unsympathetic and unjust father, and the new schoolmistress and her convict husband.

NOTES

Snuffy was the nickname given to Crayshaw, the cruel master of the school from which Jack ran away.

Babel was the city mentioned in Scripture where the confusion of tongues took place. It now applies to any confused mixture of sounds.

Brogue. In Irish and Gaelic *brog* means a stout coarse shoe of rough hide. It was worn by the people in the remoter parts of Ireland and Scotland. The word brogue is now applied to the manner of speaking or dialect of such people. It is still used also as the name of a kind of shoe.

Slops are the working clothes of a sailor. It comes from an Icelandic word *sloppr*, meaning a rough outer garment or something slipped on.

Gallows-bird is a person who deserves to be hung on the gallows.

Whineging is Biddy's word for whining.

Mollified comes from two Latin words *mollis* meaning soft, and *facio* I make. It means here to soften or make less angry.

Half-caste. A half-caste is the child of one white parent and one coloured. The half-caste referred to here was the worst bully at Crayshaw's school. He was also a wonderful acrobat and from him Jack learnt many tricks.

Tim Binder and Bob Furniss were both village boys whom Jack knew.

Squash pie. Squash is the American name for the pumpkin.

ORAL QUESTIONS

1. Refer to page 154 where Biddy speaks of the good-natured foreigner who helped her. With your teacher's help see if you can find any famous poems or songs where the exile longs for home.

2. The foreigner mentioned on this page was probably a Frenchman. There were many French exiles in England about this time. Use your history books and find out why.

3. The watchman says to Biddy " You're a rum lot, you Irish ! " and Biddy retorts, " We are, dear, and that's why we'd be comin' all the way to Lancashire for the improvement of our manners." What did Biddy mean ? This is a good example of " sarcasm." Can you find any better ones in this book.

WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. Write a description of what you imagine to be a typical day in Biddy's life at the docks.

2. Write the letter which Alister might have written to his mother describing how he got on to the boat and his first night's experiences there. (Don't use dialect).

3. Jack could not decide whether it was better for Biddy that Micky should return. What do you think?

4. Write the story of Biddy's life.

OLD-FASHIONED FAIRY TALES

There are very few things in these two stories that you will not understand. With the help of your dictionary make your own notes on any words that puzzle you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

1. Both these stories are built up on the same plan. Can you see what this plan is?

2. Which do you think is the more dangerous fool; the cobbler who misapplies his mother's good advice, or the fool who trusts the knave?

WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. Write in a few words a moral for each of these stories.

2. Tell the story of the knave and fool as it appeared to the knave.

3. Write a letter from the cobbler's mother to her sister describing what happened to her misguided son, and asking for advice and help.

A GREAT EMERGENCY

The three chapters we give of this story are not by any means the most exciting, but the first chapter is one of Mrs.

Ewing's brightest and most humorous; the other two we quote because they are interesting to boys. Also they illustrate once more the longing of healthy English country boys to seek excitement and adventure. The irony of it all was that the only great emergency that ever occurred in Charlie's family took place while he was away: his home was burnt down and Rupert and Henrietta had to be very brave to rescue the youngest child from the burning house. However, Charlie did become a sailor and hoped to prove himself brave, and ready for great emergencies.

NOTES

With the aid of your dictionary find out the meaning of: *expiration, inspiration, litter, portmanteaus, inscrutable, reiterated,* and any other word about which you are doubtful. Place each in a sentence of your own.

Weston's ballad (p. 214) refers to a song made by another school boy about Charlie when he first went to school and when he was inclined to brag.

Catharine-wheel. St. Catharine was an early Christian martyr of Alexandria, who was put to death in 307 A.D., after having been cruelly tortured on toothed wheels. From this we get the name "Catharine wheel." St. Catharine's festival falls on November 25th, and the firework popularly known as Catharine wheel is probably a survival of that festival.

"Giant figure-heads like dismembered Jins out of some Arabian tale." The old wooden ships were always adorned at the bows with figures, such as those of men, women, and beasts. Sometimes they were very finely carved, but more often rather crudely done and therefore ugly like the evil spirits (Jins or genii) which play such a big part in many Eastern tales, *e.g.*, in the tale of Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp. *Dismembered* means "with the legs cut off" just as these figureheads seem.

Admiral Bligh, 1763—1817, was an English Admiral who sailed under Captain Cook round the world and was sent in 1787 as the Commander of the ship "Bounty" to Tahiti. There his men mutinied and Bligh with 18 men was cast adrift in a small open boat. This he bravely sailed to Java, over 3,600 miles away. Later he became Governor of New South Wales,

but the Colonists didn't like him and put him into prison. Later he returned to England and was made an Admiral. The story of the mutineers is told in Ballantyne's exciting story, "The Lonely Island."

ORAL QUESTIONS

1. Act the scene at the ticket office at Fenchurch Street Station or the scene with the bad boy.

2. Can you suggest what countries any of the ships in dock had come from?

3. Why do you think Charlie might succeed as an adventurer where Fred would fail?

4. "It was a very bitter tear." Why?

WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. "How to act in an emergency" was the title of Rupert's lectures. They included "how to behave in the event of a fire in the house, an epidemic in the neighbourhood, a bite from a mad dog, a chase by a mad bull, broken limbs, runaway horses, a chimney on fire or a young lady burning to death." Choose any one of these and say what you would do.

2. Re-write in correct English Fred's letter to his Mother and Samuel Rowe's letter to Mr. Johnson.

3. Charlie and Fred wished to sail as stowaways. Do you know of any other stowaways in Mrs. Ewing's works? Compare what happened to Charlie with what happened to one of them.

4. Describe, as if you were Charlie speaking, the journey from London Bridge Pier to Victoria Docks.

5. In Mrs. Ewing's books boys often leave the country for the towns and the sea. Why do they want to go and why do they so often come back?